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**For my parents,  
Charles and Linda Lowson.**

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# **Daguenet le Fol:**

a lesser known representation  
of madness  
in the thirteenth century  
French Arthurian prose romances

Sarah Louise Lowson

submitted for the degree of

**PhD**



- 6 DEC 2004

Department of French  
University of Durham

2004



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## Daguenet le Fol:

a lesser known representation  
of madness  
in the thirteenth century  
French Arthurian prose romances

### Abstract

Whilst critical material on the subject of the heroes and other major figures in the Arthurian romances abounds, little attention has been paid to those who, although playing relatively minor roles in individual stories, pop up again and again across a wide range of such romances. The aim of this study is rehabilitate one such character who has received little critical attention, Daguenet le Fol, whose appearances in the French Arthurian prose romances are brief, but he is unique in that he owes his identity to his madness – his *folie*.

Daguenet, for most modern readers, is a character who, due to the scarcity and brevity of his appearances, seems worthy of little more than a passing mention. However it is precisely the brief yet recurrent nature of his involvement with the romances which makes him so remarkable. Daguenet's increasingly detailed and significant appearances bear witness to the fact that, despite his apparently minor status, his relationship to *folie* caught the imagination of a number of medieval writers. By bringing together his appearances in four thirteenth century French Arthurian prose romances, the prose *Lancelot*, prose *Tristan*, *Guiron le Courtois*, and the *Prophéties de Merlin*, and looking at them in the chronological order in which they were composed, this study traces the evolution of the portrayal of that *folie* as different authors manipulate the material produced by their predecessors for their own ends, developing and adapting various aspects of Daguenet's character yet retaining an overall sense of continuity of his identity.

Thus this study demonstrates the dangers of neglecting a wealth of characters whose potential to enhance our understanding of this body of work and the way in which it was composed remains largely untapped.

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## Preface

Whilst critical material on the subject of the heroes and other major figures in the Arthurian romances abounds, little attention has been paid to those who, although playing relatively minor roles in individual stories, pop up again and again across a wide range of such romances. The interest and value of tracing the development of such characters across the variety of texts in which they appear is highlighted particularly by the few studies which have been undertaken, such as those on the subject of Kay and Sagremor,<sup>1</sup> which trace the characters through their careers in different contexts, which in turn facilitates a clearer understanding of each individual appearance.

The aim of this study is to follow in such illustrious footsteps and to rehabilitate another character who has received little critical attention, and who, in fact, many modern readers of the prose romances will not even remember. Daguenet le Fol's appearances in the French Arthurian prose romances are admittedly brief, particularly in relation to the total length of some of those texts. He does however have a unique selling point: his *folie*. Unlike his more well-known counterparts, such

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<sup>1</sup> I am thinking, for example, of the following: Linda Gowans' pursuit of Kay from his origins down to the present day in *Cei and the Arthurian Legend* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1988), a study which is complemented by Peter Noble's articles providing a fascinating insight into the development of Kay from Celtic hero through to King Arthur's seneschal: 'Kay the Seneschal in Chrétien de Troyes and his Predecessors', *Reading Medieval Studies*, 1 (1975), 55-70; 'The Heroic Tradition of Kei', *Reading Medieval Studies*, 14 (1988), 125-37; and William W. Kibler's study of Sagremor in Chrétien's work, 'Sagremor in the Arthurian Verse Romances', in *'Por la soie amisté': Essays in honor of Norris J. Lacy*, ed. by Keith Busby and Catherine M. Jones (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), pp. 283-92.

as Yvain, Tristan and Lancelot, Daguenet's *folie* is not merely a phase from which he eventually recovers, but, as his soubriquet suggests, it is integral to his identity. By bringing together all of his appearances in one study, I will trace the evolution of the portrayal of that *folie* as different authors manipulate the material produced by their predecessors for their own ends, developing and adapting various aspects of Daguenet's character yet retaining an overall sense of continuity in his identity.

I shall begin by considering the wider context of *folie* out of which Daguenet emerges. What did the label *fol* mean to a medieval audience? What traditions might have contributed to the way in which he is portrayed? What expectations might this engender? What other contemporary examples of *folie* might inform our understanding of Daguenet? This introductory chapter will be followed by analysis of Daguenet in each of the four romances in which he plays a part.<sup>2</sup> In order to trace the evolution of his portrayal, I shall look at the romances in the chronological order in which they were written, beginning with the prose *Lancelot* in the first half of the thirteenth century, through the prose *Tristan* and *Guiron le Courtois*, and ending with the *Prophécies de Merlin* in the last quarter of the same century. From a close textual analysis of each appearance, I will consider not only Daguenet's relationship with the characters immediately around him, but his relationship to the narrative as a whole. What role does he play? What is the significance of his *folie* in each different context? How does this differ from earlier portrayals? Does Daguenet's involvement in each romance have wider narrative implications than might first appear to be the case?

All of this will allow us to build a picture of Daguenet, the nature of his *folie* and the development of his role in the prose romances. Armed with this fuller

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix One for details of all of his appearances.

picture, we will be able to see that scholars who, on the basis of his early appearances in one or two romances, dismiss Daguenet as merely a ‘cowardly knight’<sup>3</sup> or ‘the embodiment of cowardice and chivalric ineptitude’<sup>4</sup> underestimate him badly, failing to take account of ‘son histoire...riche et intéressante’ which ‘s’édifie peu à peu au fil des manuscrits’,<sup>5</sup> and which makes him a fascinating and rewarding subject of research.

The completion of this study would not have been possible without the help and support of a large number of people, friends, family, academic staff and fellow post-graduates, who number too many to be mentioned here, but to each of whom I express my deepest gratitude. Firstly, I must express my gratitude for the financial support given to me by the University of Durham, whose generous award of a partial three-year PhD studentship enabled me to embark upon this work. To the Department of French, University of Durham, I owe a particular debt of gratitude for all its support, both personal and practical, especially in the provision of resources such as IT facilities, photocopying and inter-library loans as well as a travel bursary which made possible a research trip to Paris in the summer of 1999. I also thank the staff of the following university and research libraries whose help and co-operation were invaluable in facilitating my research: the British Library; Bibliothèque nationale de France; Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal; Durham University Library;

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<sup>3</sup> Elspeth Kennedy, *Lancelot and the Grail: A Study of the Prose ‘Lancelot’* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Sylvia Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature: Identities Found and Lost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 45. Huot’s consideration of Daguenet and his *folie* is based only on his appearances in the prose *Lancelot* and the prose *Tristan*.

<sup>5</sup> Fritz, Jean-Marie, ‘Daguenet, ou le bouffon amoureux’, in *Styles et valeurs: pour une histoire de l’art littéraire au moyen âge*, ed. by Daniel Poirion (Paris: SEDES, 1990), p. 37.

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Special thanks also go to the following individuals, without whose particular support this would not have been possible: Professor Ann Moss, who inspired and encouraged me from my earliest days at Durham; Dr Geoffrey Bromiley, my supervisor for the majority of this study, who very generously continued to support me even into his well-earned retirement; Professor Jane Taylor, my subsequent supervisor, who inherited me by default, but without whom I would never have been able to 'find my story and stick to it'; my father, Charles Lowson, who, instead of enjoying his well-deserved retirement, bravely and willingly took up the challenge of the invaluable but tedious tasks of proof-reading, cross-checking quotations, footnotes and bibliography, saving time and my sanity; and finally, to both my parents and to Rod, who have never lost faith in me over the long and seemingly endless years this has taken to complete. Whilst the completion of this study owes a great deal to the help of these generous people, the responsibility for any mistakes or omissions is entirely mine.

**Note:** Although it was only during the final stages of the completion of this work (September 2003) that Sylvia Huot's excellent study of madness in medieval French literature was published,<sup>6</sup> I have done my best to take account of her work in the time available to me.

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<sup>6</sup> See above, note 4.

# Chapter One

## *Introduction*

Daguenet le Fol seems, at first glance, an unlikely subject for study. Although he appears in four of the French Arthurian prose romances,<sup>1</sup> his appearances are brief, often consisting of only one episode, and he could easily be dismissed as simply another of the myriad of minor characters who inhabit the complex world of these lengthy romances.

However, to dismiss him so peremptorily would, as I hope to show, be a mistake. Brief though his appearances may be, Daguenet has a unique role in these romances: he is *fou*.<sup>2</sup> He is, of course, not the only character in the Arthurian romances ever to suffer *folie*.<sup>3</sup> Yvain, Tristan and Lancelot are three very well known

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<sup>1</sup> He appears in the prose *Lancelot*, prose *Tristan*, *Guiron le Courtois* and *Les Prophécies de Merlin*. As well as the main appearances I shall examine in the main body of this study, Daguenet receives very brief mentions in several romances which post-date those we shall be looking at. However, as they are mainly extremely brief and derivative, they add little to our understanding of the overall development of the character, although they do bear witness to the widespread familiarity with Daguenet. For details see Appendix One.

<sup>2</sup> The French term *folie* embraces a much wider spectrum of behaviour than its most common English translation, madness. Modern English draws a distinction between actual madness and folly, between madmen whose foolish behaviour results from insanity and fools who are not necessarily mad, where the Old French *fol* or the modern French *fou* and *folie* do not, and so simply to translate *folie* as madness would be misleading. In order to preserve this breadth of meaning, and the concomitant ambiguity, I shall instead use the French *fol*, *fou* or *folie* in this context.

<sup>3</sup> There was little critical material available on the somewhat diffuse general subject of madness in the Middle Ages until the appearance of two excellent and extensive studies of the subject: Muriel Laharie, *La Folie au moyen âge: XIe-XIIIe siècles* (Paris: Le Léopard d'Or, 1991) and Jean-Marie Fritz, *Le Discours du fou au moyen âge, XIIe-XIIIe siècles: étude comparée des discours littéraire,*



and studied victims of *folie* at various points in their knightly careers. But each of those knights becomes *fou*, suffers for a while, then recovers to continue on their respective adventures. Their *folie* is interesting, but only as a part of the whole story in which they are involved.

What sets Daguenet apart is the fact that 'son identité est la folie':<sup>4</sup> he is defined by his *folie*. He is the only character in the French Arthurian prose romances who is consistently *fou* over the course of each of his appearances. That is not to say that he is permanently *fou* - as we shall see, in *Guiron le Courtois*, we learn that Daguenet was once a great knight - but that our only experience of him is in this

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*médical, juridique et théologique de la folie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992). As Foucault's seminal work *Folie et déraison: histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris: Plon, 1961) deals with the subject of madness mainly since the Enlightenment, it has not been particularly useful to this study, although, of course, it has not been ignored. Roy Porter's *Madness: A Brief History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) provides an excellent and detailed overview of madness through the ages; see also Judith Silverman Neaman, *Suggestion of the Devil: The Origins of Madness* (New York: Doubleday, 1975). On madness in the literature of the Middle Ages, Sylvia Huot's very recent excellent study of the subject (Huot, *Madness*) provides a fascinating insight into a range of perspectives on the subject; see also Judith Silverman Neaman, 'The Distracted Knight: A Study of Insanity in the Arthurian Romances' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1967; abstract in *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 29 (1967), p. 573-A); Penelope Doob, *Nebuchadnezzar's Children: Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974); Lilian Feder, *Madness in Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980). I am also particularly indebted to the following articles: Monique Santucci, 'Le fou dans les lettres françaises médiévales', *Lettres Romanes*, 36 (1982), 195-211; Philippe Ménard, 'Les fous dans la société médiévale: le témoignage de la littérature aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles', *Romania*, 98 (1987), 432-59; Philippe Ménard, 'Les emblèmes de la folie dans la littérature et dans l'art (XIIe-XIIIe siècles)', in *Farai Chansoneta novele: essais sur la liberté créatrice au moyen âge. Hommages à Jean-Charles Payen* (Caen: Université de Caen, 1989), pp. 253-65.

<sup>4</sup> Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, p. 264:

Un fait, cependant, demeure: aucun roman ne réécrit la folie d'un personnage. Tout se passe comme si le *Lancelot en prose* ou le *Tristan en prose* épuisait toutes les capacités de leur héros à devenir fou. La réécriture nécessite un changement de personnages: on ne réécrit pas une *folie* Yvain, mais on écrit une *folie* Lancelot à la lumière de la *folie* Yvain. Un seul personnage fait exception: Daguenet, dont, il est vrai, l'identité est la folie. Sa folie s'écrit peu à peu au cours du XIIIe siècle du *Lancelot* aux *Prophecies de Merlin*.

state. He is inextricably linked with *folie*: it becomes an integral part of our perception of his character.

Even so, a character whose appearances are so limited in number and length might still be ignored, were it not for the prestigious company which he keeps.<sup>5</sup> Not only is he closely linked to Arthur's court, and King Arthur himself - he is introduced to us several times as 'le fou le roi Artus'<sup>6</sup> - but he is also closely

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<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Daguenet seems to have been largely ignored by scholars. Only Jean-Marie Fritz provides an analysis of all four of Daguenet's major appearances in the prose romances that we shall be looking at in his article 'Daguenet ou le bouffon amoureux'. This article subsequently appeared in a slightly modified form in his comprehensive study of madness in the Middle Ages (Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, pp. 264-79), in which book Daguenet is also discussed in a variety of contexts. Fritz's work was the inspiration for this study. Sylvia Huot also considers Daguenet in some depth in her excellent book *Madness in Medieval French Literature*, which was published only when my study was in its final stages of completion. Huot's analysis of Daguenet is limited to his role as 'simple fool' opposite the 'complex madmen' (p. 91) who are the heroes of the prose *Lancelot* and the prose *Tristan* (see especially pp. 45-59), and no mention is made of his role in *Guiron le Courtois* or the *Prophéties de Merlin*. Even in critical studies on the individual romances, Daguenet receives little, if any attention. Elspeth Kennedy, for example, in her superlative study *Lancelot and the Grail* refers to Daguenet only as a 'cowardly knight' (p. 30 and p. 56) whose association with Lancelot brings the hero humiliation, without reference to Daguenet's *folie*. Daguenet's involvement with Tristan's *folie* is noted by several scholars, but little analysis is made of his role. For example, see: Huguette Legros, 'La Folie Tristan dans le *Tristan en prose*: aboutissement de traditions antérieures et réécriture', in *Miscellanea Mediaevalia: Mélanges offerts à Philippe Ménard*, ed. by J. Claude Faucon, Alain Labbé and Danielle Quérue, 2 vols (Paris: Champion, 1998), ii, pp. 869-78; Philippe Ménard, 'Tristan et les bergers', in *Nouvelles Recherches sur le 'Tristan en prose'*, ed. by Jean Dufournet (Paris: Champion, 1990), pp. 149-71; Emmanuèle Baumgartner, *La Harpe et l'épée: tradition et renouvellement dans le 'Tristan en prose'* (Paris: SEDES, 1990), p. 78; Renée L. Curtis, 'Tristan Forsené: the Episode of the Hero's Madness in the *Prose Tristan*', in *The Changing Face of Arthurian Romance: Essays on Arthurian Prose Romances in Memory of Cedric E. Pickford*, ed. by A. Adams and others (Cambridge: Brewer, 1986), pp. 10-22.

<sup>6</sup> He is only actually given this title in the prose *Tristan*: 'Daganet, le fol au roi Artus' (*Le Roman de Tristan en prose*, ed. by Renée L. Curtis, Arthurian Studies, 12-14, 3 vols (Cambridge: Brewer, 1985; first publ. - i: Munich: Hüber, 1963; - ii: Leiden: Brill, 1976), ii, §654, l.3, p. 229); 'Daguenés, li fox le roi Artu' (*Le Roman de Tristan en prose*, ed. by Philippe Ménard, Textes Littéraires Français, 9 vols (Geneva: Droz, 1987-1997), i, §169, l.4, p. 248); 'le fol le roi Artus' (Appendix Three, p. 275, l.5). In

associated with other very prominent characters. Lancelot, Tristan, King Mark and King Arthur all have close encounters with Daguenet. To each, he acts as a kind of foil, pointing out or reflecting back on them aspects of their character or behaviour which informs our understanding of the main character, whilst simultaneously entertaining not only the fictional audience but the readership of the romance itself with his antics. The one exception to this is his appearance in *Guiron le Courtois*, where the focus of the narrative turns onto Daguenet himself, and it is a better understanding of his character, rather than of someone else's, which is the object of the episode.

One surprising aspect of Daguenet's appearances is the way in which several different authors picked him out to appear in their tales. After all, modern readers could be forgiven for failing to notice his admittedly brief appearances in individual romances: it is only when they are gathered together that the interest of this character becomes apparent. What drew this minor character to the attention of these medieval authors? What was it that inspired them not only to draw upon his previous appearances for material, but also to take that same material and remould it, developing Daguenet in new directions according to their own requirements? It is this evolution over the course of several different romances which sets Daguenet apart from other more well-known victims of *folie*, like Tristan and Lancelot. Whilst their episodes of *folie* are over and done with within the confines of one romance, Daguenet's *folie* is allowed to evolve over the course of several quite different tales:

Personnage qui n'est pas prisonnier d'une longue tradition, Daguenet échappe au stéréotype et est le lieu d'une invention: par sa bouche et par ses gestes, la folie va parler et se transformer.<sup>7</sup>

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the subsequent romances, although this title is not used, the fact of Daguenet's association with King Arthur, as we shall see, is assumed and integral to his role.

<sup>7</sup> Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, p. 264.

It is the course of this evolution that I hope to illuminate, and to this end, this study will examine closely Daguenet's appearances in the prose romances in the chronological order in which they appeared. The prose *Lancelot* is the earliest, and Daguenet's appearance, beside Lancelot himself, is very brief, but contains many of the elements which will define Daguenet's later roles. In the next romance, the prose *Tristan*, Daguenet's role is much extended. He not only appears opposite the hero, as he had done in the *Lancelot*, but also in two further episodes which expand upon the role established in the prose *Lancelot*. Daguenet's longest and most detailed appearances are in two later romances, which are less well known to the modern reader, *Guiron le Courtois* and the *Prophécies de Merlin*. The first marks a significant departure from his previous appearances, as the focus is turned on Daguenet himself, and an entire episode is dedicated to telling the story of his *folie*. The second finds him again playing opposite a very important character – this time it is King Arthur – and Daguenet finds himself in perhaps his most surprising role, as replacement for the king himself.

Even though Daguenet and his role in the romances in which he appears to change and develop, one factor remains constant throughout. From his introduction in the prose *Lancelot* through to his final appearance in the *Prophécies de Merlin*, Daguenet is identified with the cognomen *le fol*. Strangely, although this is clearly an important element of his character, its meaning is never explained in the text. Let us then begin by considering whether this held a significance for a medieval audience which could help us to understand his role in the romances we will be looking at. Is this cognomen merely a reflection of Daguenet's character or might it point to a more specific role which he plays at court?

According to Barbara Swain, the *fol* did indeed have a particular significance for medieval society. He was an object of amusement and entertainment:

The creature behind the mask and the name when he is genuinely one species of the great genus fool has one inevitable characteristic: he appears from some point of view erring and irresponsible. He transgresses or ignores the code of reasoned self-restraint under which society attempts to exist, is unmeasured in his hilarity or in his melancholy, disregards the logic of cause and effect and conducts himself in ways which would seem rash and shocking to normal mortals. But he is a fool because his extravagances are supposed to be due not to intention but to some deficiency in his education, experience or innate capacity for understanding. He is not to blame for them, and society, amused at his freedom from the bonds of its conventions, laughs at him while it condemns him. Within any society these undisciplined irresponsible individuals are found. They are its 'fools', and their reflection is sure to be found in the literature of the group.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries this erring, irresponsible, extra-social, comical creature was popularly, though not exclusively, known in French and English literature by the simple name of 'fool' or 'fol'.<sup>8</sup>

The *fol* could encompass a wide range of people whose personalities or circumstances led to behaviour which did conform to the expected norm, from those whose ineptitude stemmed from lack of intelligence or social awareness through to those whose lack of control was due to insanity; from those who were born *fou* through to those for whom *folie* is a illness, or those for whom playing the 'fol' was a profession. A *fol* was someone whose behaviour, whatever the reason for it, fell outside the expected boundaries of social conventions, singling them out as objects of amusement and entertainment.

While clearly such characters could and would exist in all levels of society, the dawning of the feudal society saw the increasingly deliberate exploitation of the *fol* for entertainment. As the court became a centre for activity, more and more people

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<sup>8</sup> Barbara Swain, *Fools and Folly during the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932; repr. New York: Folcroft, 1973), pp. 1-2. On this subject, see also Enid Welsford's authoritative survey of the subject *The Fool: His Social and Literary History* (London: Faber, 1935); *The Fool and the Trickster: Studies in Honor of Enid Welsford*, ed. by Paul V. A. Williams (Cambridge: Brewer, 1979); Sandra Billington, *A Social History of the Fool* (New York: Harvester, 1984).

gathered together in one place led to the creation of a demand for diversion. One way of fulfilling this demand was to make use of the *fol*:

Avec la mise en place de la société féodale au tournant des Xe et XIe siècles et le développement de la vie de cour, notamment dans les châteaux, l'entourage destiné à servir et à amuser les seigneurs s'étoffe. Le fou y occupe une place sortant de l'ordinaire. [...] Le rôle du fou est de faire rire et de divertir, en particulier au cours des longues soirées d'hiver, ou à l'occasion des fêtes.<sup>9</sup>

And so was born the *fou de cour*.<sup>10</sup> Gradually, this role seems to have developed an official capacity: historical records show that by the middle of the twelfth century the French and English courts were actually paying for these services. For example, records exist that show that in 1175 and 1179 Henry II of England was making payments to a Roger Follo.<sup>11</sup> While precise details as to this man's position have not survived, the closeness of his sobriquet to the word *fol* certainly suggests that he was a *fou de cour*, and that the payments indicate the official recognition of this. Later account books appear to demonstrate the continuation of this role, which record similar payments made to other individuals who carry the epithet 'le Fol'. In France, the first officially recorded instance of a *fol*

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<sup>9</sup> Laharie, *La Folie*, pp. 271 and 273.

<sup>10</sup> Welsford notes how the paid *fol*, or 'professional buffoon' was not an innovation original to the medieval court. The early roots of this role of the *fol*, who received material gains in return for their entertainment, are to be found at large gatherings of people as far back as ancient Greek and Roman civilisations, where such persons would earn their meal by entertaining the guests at a dinner party. In the later Middle Ages, this developed to the extent that the *fol* was sometimes merely a performer acting the fool in return for a wage. See Welsford, *The Fool*, Chapter 1, pp. 3-28, 'The Professional Buffoon'. For more on the subject of the *fou de cour*, see particularly: Barbara Swain, *Fools and Folly*; Maurice Lever, *Le Sceptre et la marotte: histoire des fous de cour* (Paris: Fayard, 1983); Sandra Billington, 'Suffer Fools Gladly: the Fool in Medieval England and the play Mankind', in *The Fool and the Trickster*, ed. by Paul V.A. Williams, pp. 36-54; E. Bourassin, 'Nains et bouffons de cour', *Historia*, 523 (1990), 7-15; William Willeford, *The Fool and his Scepter: a study of clowns, jesters and their audience* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1969); C.W. Beaumont, *The History of the Harlequin* (London: Beaumont, 1926; repr. New York: Blom, 1967); John Doran, *The History of Court Fools* (London: Bentley, 1858).

at a royal court is not found until 1316, when Philippe II created the statutory position of *fol* 'en titre d'office',<sup>12</sup> an action which was soon followed by an entry in the accounts was made of the purchase of a coat for a 'Geffroy le Fol'.<sup>13</sup> It seems that in creating the office of *fol*, or *fou de cour*, Philippe was hoping to prevent his favoured companion from being poached by another court, suggesting that already such individuals were well-known and that the role had a widespread popularity.

Although this historical evidence points to the existence of the role of a *fou de cour* in some capacity from the second half of the twelfth century onwards, it is perhaps surprising to note that it is reflected very seldom in literature before the arrival of Daguenet towards the middle of the thirteenth century. In the *chansons de geste*, for example, important literary sources of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries depicting kings and their courts, there is no evidence of the *fou de cour*, and he appears only infrequently in other contemporary texts:

Le fou de cour est, à notre connaissance, totalement absent des chansons de gestes du XIIe et du XIIIe siècles, alors qu'il apparaît ça et là dans les romans bretons depuis le *Conte du Graal* jusqu'au *Tristan en prose*, suscitant la création d'un personnage original: Daguenet, le fou du roi Arthur.<sup>14</sup>

The earliest surviving literary appearance of a *fou de cour* occurs in a pseudo-historical source, Wace's *Roman de Rou*, written between 1160 and 1183, and which tells the history of the Norman people.<sup>15</sup> It recounts an episode which took place in 1047 and in which a *fol* played a part. A plot was hatched by Guy of Burgundy against William, Duke of Normandy. As William lies sleeping, the plotters approach

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<sup>11</sup> For more detail of these payments, see Welsford, *The Fool*, pp. 114-15.

<sup>12</sup> Maurice Lever, *Le Sceptre et la marotte*, p. 122.

<sup>13</sup> Welsford, *The Fool*, p. 116.

<sup>14</sup> Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, p. 31.

<sup>15</sup> See *Le Roman de Rou de Wace*, ed. A.J.Holden, 3 vols (Paris: Picard, 1970-73), ii (1971), pp. 13-14.

his chamber, hoping to overwhelm him easily. However, their attempts to surprise him in his sleep are foiled by the shouts of the faithful Golet, a *fol*, who thus saves William's life:

De prinsome eis vos un fol,  
 Goles out non, un pel ei col,  
 a l'us de la chambre criant  
 e les pareiz al pel batant.  
 'Ovrez', dit il, 'ovrez, ovrez!  
 Ja morreiz tuit, levez, levez!  
 Ou giés Guillaume? por quei dorz?  
 S'ateinz i es ja seras morz;  
 ti enemî se vont armer,  
 se ci te poent ja trover  
 ja mais n'iestras de Constentin,  
 ne ne vivras jusqu'al matin.' <sup>16</sup>

Golet, despite being a *fol*, is able to recognise the forthcoming danger and warn his master in time to save his life. He is clearly a very positive character yet also rather puzzling. How can he be both wise and *fol*?<sup>17</sup>

This ambiguity seems to be perpetuated in the earliest appearance of a *fou de cour* in Arthurian romance, which occurs in Chrétien's *Le Conte du Graal*.<sup>18</sup> Here we find a character, labelled at various points both 'sot' and 'fol',<sup>19</sup> who is credited with strange prophetic powers. A young girl at Arthur's court had, for a reason that is never given, been unable to laugh for ten years. This *fou* had predicted that she would be able laugh again only when she met the knight who would become the best in the world:

<sup>16</sup> *Le Roman de Rou*, ed. Holden, ii, ll.3651-62.

<sup>17</sup> I shall discuss this apparent contradiction below – see note 27.

<sup>18</sup> The prophetic role of the 'fol' in the *Conte du Graal* is examined by Sara Sturm-Maddox in her article 'King Arthur's Prophetic Fool: Prospection in the *Conte du Graal*', *Marche Romane*, 29 (1979), 103-08.

<sup>19</sup> 'Dans le Conte du Graal de Chrétien de Troyes, les termes 'sot' et 'fol' sont interchangeables' (Frances Sautman, 'Les métamorphoses du fou à la fin du moyen âge', in *Pour une mythologie du moyen âge*, Collection de l'ENS, 41 (Paris: Presses de l'École Normale Supérieure, 1988), pp. 197-216, (p. 198)).



'Ceste pucele ne rira  
 Jusque tant que ele verra  
 Celui qui de chevalerie  
 Avra tote la seignorie.'<sup>20</sup>

One day, Perceval, still young and as yet unknown and unproven, arrives at court demanding to be knighted. Appalled by the impertinence of the young fellow, Kay treats him to an angry outburst, for which he is thoroughly upbraided by Arthur. Whilst this is going on, Perceval leaves, passing the young girl, who laughs and tells Perceval that it is indeed he who shall be that most excellent knight to whom has been so recently alluded:

Je pans et cuit en mon coraige  
 Q'an trestot lo monde n'avra  
 N'il n'iert ne l'an ni savra  
 Nul chevalier meillor de toi.<sup>21</sup>

On hearing such praise of the impudent young man, Kay's anger is revived, and he storms over to the girl, slapping her face so hard that she is thrown to the ground. Returning to his place, he sees the *fou* who had originally predicted these events, and, for good measure, kicks him into the fire:

An son retor trova un sot  
 Lez une cheminee estant,  
 Si lo bota el feu ardant  
 Do pié par corroz et par ire.<sup>22</sup>

The narrative role of the *fou* here is clear: to point up Perceval as the future hero that he will become. The way in which this prediction is presented is particularly significant. It is not simply a case of a *fou* standing up, pointing to this unlikely lad and predicting that he will one day be champion of the world. Such

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<sup>20</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Conte du Graal*, in Chrétien de Troyes, *Romans*, ed. Michel Zink, Classiques Modernes, La Pochothèque (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1994), pp. 937-1211, (ll.1015-18, p. 973).

<sup>21</sup> Chrétien, *Le Conte du Graal*, ll.996-99, p. 973.

<sup>22</sup> Chrétien, *Le Conte du Graal*, ll.1010-13, p. 973.

apparently ridiculous claims could easily be dismissed as mad ramblings. Instead, the prediction is independently duplicated by a third party – the girl – thus lending it credibility.

The strange association of a wisdom or prophetic ability with the *fou* seems to stem from the other-worldly quality of such a character. He is *fou* because he behaves and perhaps speaks in a manner which is not immediately understandable to those around him: thus he is an outsider. It is but a short hop from this to the conclusion that this outsider might have other powers and abilities which are not normal, including prophecy, or that he is in some way connected to the greater mysteries of the supernatural:

Apparemment étranger au monde des hommes, le fou est peut-être en contact avec le monde invisible, avec les êtres d'En-Haut. Il entrevoit les choses cachées. il donne par moments l'impression de participer aux grands mystères du monde.<sup>23</sup>

The reliability of the prophetic ability of this particular *fou* is further confirmed by his subsequent involvement in the story. Soon after Kay's attack on himself and the girl, the *fou* makes another prediction. He tells the king that the injuries and insults suffered by him and the girl will be avenged upon Kay by Perceval:

Et si vos met bien en covant  
Que Keus puet este toz certains  
Que mar vit les piez et les mains  
Et sa langue fole et vilaine,  
Q'ainz que past cete karentaine,  
Avra li chevaliers vanchié  
Lo cop qu'il me feri do pié,  
Et sa bufe ert molt bien rendue  
Et conparee et chier vandue  
Que il dona a la pucele.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Philippe Ménard, *Le Rire et le sourire dans le roman courtois en France au moyen âge (1150-1250)* (Geneva: Droz, 1969), p. 179.

<sup>24</sup> Chrétien, *Le Conte du Graal*, ll.1210-19, p. 979.

Sure enough, a short while later, Kay and Perceval meet in the forest, Kay is subjected to the defeated that had been described, and the prophecy is fulfilled:

Et Percevaus pas ne se faint,  
 Desus la bocle an haut l'ataint,  
 Si l'abati sor une roiche  
 Que la chanole li escloiche  
 Et qu'antre lo code et l'aisele,  
 Ensin con une seiche estele,  
 L'os do braz destre li brissa,  
 Si son li soz lo devissa,  
 Que molt sovant deviné l'ot.  
 Voirz fu li devinaus au sot.<sup>25</sup>

It is interesting to note the great emphasis placed by the narrator on the fact that the prediction has come true. His affirmation of the truth of the words of the *fou*, emphasised so clearly by the construction of the last line, refers not only backwards, to the successful prediction of the events which have just occurred, but also forwards to the outcome of the tale. The accuracy of this particular relatively minor prophecy also suggests the accuracy of a much more important one: that Perceval will be 'celui qui de chevalerie / Avra tote la seignorie'.<sup>26</sup> And so in the *Conte du Graal*, there is a sense in which 'le fou a plus de sagesse que les sages':<sup>27</sup> he can see in Perceval the great knight that he will be, whilst those around him see little more than an ignorant young man. In predicting Perceval's future success, the *fou* demonstrates how his

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<sup>25</sup> Chrétien, *Le Conte du Graal*, ll.4239-48, p. 1068.

<sup>26</sup> See note 20.

<sup>27</sup> Ménard, *Le Rire et le sourire*, p. 179. This association of *folie* with *sagesse* does not seem to have been unusual, and, as Huot notes (*Madness*, p. 16), is an idea which persists today:

There is another side to the perception of madness in the Middle Ages as in our own time, a troubled suspicion that madness, in its freedom from the constraints of reason and social decorum, may be more honest and genuine than sanity; that the mad are gifted with deeper insights; or that they have achieved a higher plane of experience.

For an interesting discussion of the uses and meaning of *sage* in medieval French literature, see Charles Brucker, *Sage et sagesse au moyen âge (XII et XIII siècles)* (Geneva: Droz, 1987).

*folie*, that which sets him outside of normal society, also enabled him to speak a truth which was not visible to those within that society.<sup>28</sup>

The next Arthurian *fou de cour*, Tristan, in the *Folies Tristan*,<sup>29</sup> paints quite a different picture of the relationship between *fou* and court. Here we find a much lighter-hearted portrayal, reflecting more closely the role of the *fou* as entertainer. Desperate to see his love, the queen Iseut, Tristan hatches a plot to disguise himself as a *fou* in order to gain access to the queen unrecognised:

'Or voil espruver autre ren,  
Saver si ja me vendreit ben:  
Feindre mei fol, faire folie,  
Dunc n'est ço sen e grant veisdie?'<sup>30</sup>

He disguises himself carefully, swapping clothes with a fisherman, cutting his hair, changing his voice, until 'ben senble fol'.<sup>31</sup> The disguise is clearly effective, for

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<sup>28</sup> This alienation from normal society also aligns the *fou* with the hero himself, as Sturm-Maddox observes ('King Arthur's Prophetic Fool', p.108):

In the initial Arthurian scene a young intruder who has been isolated from all contact with Arthurian chivalry is recognised as hero by the single individual most profoundly alienated from the conventional judgment of courtly society.

<sup>29</sup> '*Folie Tristan*' d'Oxford and '*Folie Tristan*' de Berne, in *Tristan et Iseut: les poèmes français, la saga norroise*, trans. and ed. by Daniel Lacroix and Philippe Walter, Lettres Gothiques (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1989), pp. 233-81 and pp. 283-311.

<sup>30</sup> '*Folie Tristan*' d'Oxford, ll.179-82, p. 242.

<sup>31</sup> '*Folie Tristan*' d'Oxford, l.210, p. 242. Tristan is attempting to conform to an image which seems to have constituted a medieval stereotype of the 'fol'. This included damaged or even a complete lack of clothing, some form of tonsure, an excess of bodily hair elsewhere, and a generally dishevelled appearance. Monique Santucci notes ('Le fou dans les lettres françaises médiévales', p. 196):

Au XIIIe siècle, le fou porte en général des vêtements grossiers et en lambeaux. Parfois, il abandonne même ses 'braies' et il se promène 'nu', semblable à une bête sauvage. Couvert d'un longue barbe, il est soit 'haut tondu', soit tondu 'en croix'; les cheveux subsistants forment une croix sur le haut du crâne. On ne risque donc pas de le confondre avec un clerc dont la tonsure, marque de pénitence, laisse voir une couronne de cheveux.

As we shall see, this stereotype is also strongly reminiscent of the appearance of the traditional wild man, whose connection with *folie* is discussed below, pp. 43-47. For wider discussion of the physical appearance of the medieval *fol*, see the rest of Santucci's article, and also: Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, pp. 37-61; Laharie, *La Folie*, pp. 153-57; Ménard, 'Les fous dans la société médiévale', esp. pp. 434-42; Ménard, 'Les emblèmes de la folie'. On the subject of the tonsure, see Angelika Gross and

the guard at the castle entrance immediately recognises him as a *fou*, and allows him entry:

Li porters, quant il l'ad vëu,  
Mult l'ad cum fol bricun tenu.<sup>32</sup>

Mark's reaction to Tristan's arrival reflects the attitude towards such *fous* which will become very familiar in our dealings with Daguenet. The king clearly expects that the *fou* will be a source of amusement and entertainment for him. His initial friendly greeting of Tristan as he is brought across the room to him illustrates Mark's cheery disposition towards him:

[Mark] dit: 'Or vai un bon sergant;  
Fetes le mai venir avant!'  
Plusurs saillent, cuntre li vunt,  
En sa guisse saluet l'unt,  
Puis si amenerent le fol  
Devant le rai, le pel al col.  
Makres dit: 'Ben vengez, amis!  
Dunt estes vus? K'avez si quis?'<sup>33</sup>

Tristan plays up to Mark's expectations with his answer, using his words to convince Mark that he is a *fou* whose words cannot be taken seriously. He makes a series of statements which are patently ridiculous, including claiming his mother was a whale and that he was nursed by a tiger:

Ma mere fu une baleine,  
En mer hantat cume sereine.  
Mes je ne sai u je nasqui.  
Mult sai jo ben ki me nurri:  
Une grant tigre m'aleitat.<sup>34</sup>

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Jacqueline Thibault-Schaefer, 'Sémiotiques de la tonsure: de l'insipiens à Tristan et les fous de Dieu', in *Le Clerc au moyen âge: colloque du Centre Universitaire d'Études et de Recherches Médiévales d'Aix-en-Provence, mars 1995*, Sénéfiance, 37 (Aix-en-Provence: CUERMA, 1995), pp. 242-75.

<sup>32</sup> 'Folie Tristan' d'Oxford, ll.225-26, p. 244.

<sup>33</sup> 'Folie Tristan' d'Oxford, ll.263-70, p. 246.

<sup>34</sup> 'Folie Tristan' d'Oxford, ll.273-77, p. 246.

Delighted by the entertaining nature of these words, Mark bursts into laughter and encourages Tristan to continue with his amusing discourse by asking more questions:

Li rais s'en rit e puis respunt:  
'Ke dit la merveille de mund?'<sup>35</sup>

For Mark, Tristan is by now no more than another entertainer, whose strange words and deeds mean nothing beyond their amusement value. Once this relationship is established, the king is determined to make the most of it. Tristan is allowed to get away with making outrageous statements and claims which would be unthinkable for someone believed to be in their right mind. For example, he declares his love for the queen, accuses the king of tiring of her, and offers to take her for himself:

Reis, je vus durai ma sorur  
Pur Ysolt ki aim par amur.  
Fesum bargaine, fesum change:  
Bon est a asaer estrange.  
D'Ysolt estes tut ennuëz,  
A une autre vus acuintez,  
Baillez m'Ysolt, jo la prendrai.<sup>36</sup>

Instead of shock and outrage at the obvious insult, the king merely laughs and humours his new found entertainer. He even goes so far as to join in the charade, inviting Tristan to tell him what he would do with the queen if he were to give her up.

Tristan is able to do this because he establishes early on that he is not to be taken seriously, playing on the king's expectation that the *fou* will behave in this ridiculous manner whilst posing no real threat to the king or his court. On this basis, Tristan is able to push the boundaries of acceptability in the name of amusement and entertainment. It does not matter that Tristan is simply feigning *folie*, and that his

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<sup>35</sup> 'Folie Tristan' d'Oxford, ll.285-86, p. 246.

<sup>36</sup> 'Folie Tristan' d'Oxford, ll.287-93, p. 246.

words and actions are deliberate. In order to gain an idea of the relationship between *fou de cour* and those around him it is necessary only that they believe in his *folie*.

As Ménard points out:

Point n'est besoin d'opérer des distinctions entre la folie simulée et la démence réelle. Les simulateurs imitent à merveille la vésanie et ne sont point démasqués. On les traite comme des fous véritables.<sup>37</sup>

The very fact that Tristan's deception is so successful bears witness to the accuracy of his portrayal.

But of course, all of this fun and frivolity belies the darker purpose of the exercise. Tristan has disguised himself in order to get himself into a position which would not normally be accessible to him: an audience with the king and the queen. He exploits the fact that the words of *fou* are not taken seriously to enable him to declare his love to the queen under the nose of her husband: 'the daring stratagem consists in telling the unlikely truth in order to conceal it.'<sup>38</sup> The striking irony is that this deception entices Mark to participate actively yet unwittingly in his own betrayal: by encouraging the *fou* to speak, he allows Tristan to reveal himself to Iseut, once again bringing the two lovers together.

From all of this, do we now have a clearer picture of what it might mean for Daguenet to be 'le fol'? As we have seen, historical records, although vague as to the specific duties of the *fol* at court, do seem to indicate that by the thirteenth century, the role of *fou de cour* was one which would have been immediately recognised by a courtly audience. Whilst Daguenet in his role as Arthur's *fol* in the prose romances may be a 'personnage original',<sup>39</sup> it is certainly not an unprecedented invention.

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<sup>37</sup> Philippe Ménard, 'Les fous dans la société médiévale', pp. 433-34.

<sup>38</sup> Jacqueline T. Schaefer, 'Specularity in the Medieval *Folie Tristan* Poems: or, Madness as a Metadiscourse', *Neophilologus*, 77 (1993), 355-68, (p. 356). This article provides an excellent discussion of the intricate layers of meaning in Tristan's words.

<sup>39</sup> Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, p. 31. See note 14.

Literary sources give us more of an idea of what the function would have been, and of the attitude towards the *fol*. His primary role was to entertain with his bizarre words and actions: ‘de faire rire et de divertir’.<sup>40</sup> This, when he was attached to a specific court, earned him not only the sympathy and good will of his audience, but probably also the means from which to live. As *le fol le roi Artus*, Daguenet would probably be well known to the court in general.

But in each of the literary sources which precede Daguenet’s appearance, the *fou* seems also to have had a more serious aspect. In the *Roman de Rou*, he was a brave and loyal companion to the Duke, warning him of treachery and thus saving his life. In the *Conte du Graal*, he predicted the future success of the hero Perceval. And in the *Folies Tristan*, which provide us with a clear impression of the entertaining nature of the role of the *fou*, the true purpose of Tristan’s behaviour is to deceive the king. As we shall see, Daguenet too will prove to have a more serious role than initial impressions may suggest. Although much of what he does entertains and amuses, his appearances are rarely without a more important purpose or wider ramifications.

But while we now have a better idea of the role which a *fou* might have played in medieval society and literature, the precise nature of the *folie* of these characters is never made clear: it seems that, in order to fulfil this role, it is enough that, as a result of the *folie*, the *fou* ‘transgresses or ignores the code of reasoned self-restraint under which society attempts to exist’.<sup>41</sup> Is he simply what we might call a fool, someone whose behaviour falls outside of accepted social norms due to limited intelligence, lack of common sense, or lack of education? Or is he truly insane,

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<sup>40</sup> Laharie, *La Folie*, p. 273. See note 9.

<sup>41</sup> Swain, *Fools and Folly*, p. 1. See note 8.



suffering from a mental illness? Laharie proposes that the former conclusion is most likely

Ces 'fous' sont donc plus vraisemblablement soit des débiles mentaux dont les propos innocents déclenchent l'hilarité, soit des personnalités légèrement pathologiques dont les excentricités, la relative agressivité et le discours irrationnel sont acceptés avec intérêt, curiosité ou, plus rarement, sympathie.<sup>42</sup>

In the romances we shall be looking at, however, the distinction between this 'fool', which seems to correspond to the idea of the *fou de cour*, and the victim of mental illness, the *fou-malade*, is not so clear-cut. In one of the later romances, *Guiron le Courtois*, we learn that, whilst he was Arthur's *fou de cour*, for Daguenet, like so many of his contemporaries, *folie* was also an illness. Over the course of the episode, we learn that Daguenet was once a great knight, and that it was the loss of his lady love which precipitated his descent into *folie*. How does the tragedy of this tale tally with the image of the *fou de cour* as object of amusement? Surely the author of the *Guiron* overstretches the credulity of his readers in asking them to believe that they are one and the same character?

Before we return to this question, let us first consider what *folie* as an illness meant to the thirteenth century audience of our romances. This is important for our study of Daguenet not only because he himself will fall victim to it in the *Guiron*, but because it also forms the context for many of his other appearances. In the prose *Tristan*, for example, Daguenet and Tristan meet whilst Tristan is in the grip of violent and frenzied *folie* brought on by the apparent desertion of him by Iseut. In the *Prophécies de Merlin*, Daguenet plays opposite a quite different type of *folie*, as King Arthur cuts himself off from the world around him and seems to abandon his people and his kingdom, sinking further and further into what appears to be a deep depression. So in order to understand not only Daguenet but also the context in

which he appears and thus his role in it, it will help to address briefly these questions: what did *folie* as an illness mean to a thirteenth century audience and how is this reflected in other representations of *folie* in contemporary Arthurian romance?

In the Middle Ages, as it is today, *folie* was understood as an illness, and described in terms of physical causes, symptoms and cures. Unlike our modern theories of psychology and neurology, medieval medical theory was based largely on the humoral theory, which ‘for approximately two thousand years was the central explanatory scheme for dealing with diseases’.<sup>43</sup> This theory had its roots in ancient Greek scholarship, and particularly the Hippocratic writings. Put very simply, the body was believed to produce four humours: blood, yellow bile, phlegm and black bile (also called *melancholia*). Each humour was associated with one of the four elements and the corresponding property. Thus blood was associated with air and cold; yellow bile with fire and heat; phlegm with water and moisture; and black bile with earth and dryness. In a healthy body, these humours were balanced; an excess or lack of one or more often resulted in illness.

This theory as found in the Middle Ages owed much to a second-century Greek scholar, Galen, whose work formed the basis of medical scholarship and practice throughout the medieval period:<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Laharie, *La Folie*, p. 273.

<sup>43</sup> Stanley W. Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression: From Hippocratic Times to Modern Times* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 7. It is interesting to note the parallel between our modern ideas of mental illness caused by chemical imbalances in the brain and the medieval ideas of the imbalance of the humours. Huot observes (*Madness*, p. 3):

As described in medical treatises from antiquity to the modern era, madness is an illness grounded in the body. As a derangement caused by humoral imbalances – or, in modern terms, as a biochemical or neurological disorder – it might also be seen as a form of intoxication.

<sup>44</sup> The theory of the four humours was probably not codified before the Hippocratic work *On the Nature of Man* (Hippocrates, *Works of Hippocrates*, trans and ed. by W.H.S. Jones and E.T.

This scheme of humors and qualities was given a considerable degree of systematization by Galen, and, with occasional variations, it served most of those concerned professionally with diseases in general, and mental disorders in particular throughout the medieval centuries.<sup>45</sup>

In particular, Galen believed that three of the four humours were responsible for the efficient performance of the human body:

Galen thought that three of these humors - yellow bile, black bile, phlegm - existed in normal and abnormal forms. In optimal amounts the normal forms were useful in the body; but the abnormal forms, or an excess of the normal forms, led to disease. Acute diseases tended to be the result of anomalies of blood or yellow bile, and chronic diseases the result of anomalies of phlegm or black bile.<sup>46</sup>

This theory did not confine itself to the explanation of physical disease. Mental illness too was considered to have its roots in the balance of the humours. Galen identified three types of mental illness: *phrenitis* (frenesis, or frenzy); *mania*; and melancholy. *Phrenitis*<sup>47</sup> was caused by an excess of yellow bile, which heated the blood thus inducing fever and frenzy in the brain. It was characterised by fever and excessively agitated behaviour, often including sleeplessness, confusion, hallucinations, aggression and anxiety. The patient was liable to harm themselves, and if symptoms became particularly acute, the illness could be fatal.

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Withington, 4 vols (Cambridge MA; Harvard University Press, 1923-1931), iv, ed. by W.H.S. Jones (1931)). For a detailed discussion of the origins of this theory, see Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression*, Chapter 1, 'The Doctrine of the Four Humours', pp. 8-15, (esp. pp. 7-10).

<sup>45</sup> Stanley W. Jackson, 'Unusual Mental States in Medieval Europe: I. Medical syndromes of mental disorders: 400-1100 AD', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 27 (1972), pp. 262-97.

<sup>46</sup> Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression*, p. 42.

<sup>47</sup> For a very detailed consideration of *phrenitis*, see Jackie Pigeaud, *La Maladie de l'âme: étude sur la relation de l'âme et du corps dans la tradition médico-philosophique antique* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1981), pp. 71-100. See also Stanley W. Jackson, 'Unusual Mental States in Medieval Europe: I, Medical Syndromes of Mental Disorder 400-1100AD', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 27 (1972), 262-97 (pp. 268-74); Laharie, *La Folie*, p. 127-29.

In the Middle Ages *phrenitis* was also sometimes coupled with a disease which represented its effective opposite: *lethargia*.<sup>48</sup> This, like *phrenitis*, was characterised by fever. The patient is barely able to move, often in a deep sleep, with deeply depressed physical signs of life, such as a weak pulse, and shallow breathing. It was thought to be caused by an excess of phlegm, which was heated by the fever until it rose to the brain. The depressed physical state was associated with the cold and damp nature of phlegm itself. Like *phrenitis*, it was also considered a very serious disease, often leading to death. As Dirk Matejovski notes, these symptoms of these illnesses would probably be recognised by modern doctors as typical of the effect of certain virulent infections on the brain.<sup>49</sup> They were acute mental states, easily recognisable by the combination of fever with the loss of reason:

La symptomatologie de la *frenesis* est simple: la fièvre accompagne l'*alienatio mentis* et suffit à définir la maladie.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> For more detail on the subject of *lethargia*, see Laharie, *La Folie*, pp. 134-37.

<sup>49</sup> Matejovski writes (Dirk Matejovski, *Das Motiv des Wahnsinns in der mittelalterlichen Dichtung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996), p. 41):

Klammert man aus dem Krankheitskomplex 'Phrenitis, Lethargie, Stupor' die beiden letztgenannten Leiden aus, dann würden die nosologischen Schemata der antiken und mittelalterlichen Ärzte in diesem Fall auf einige Krankheitsbilder verweisen, die die moderne Medizin kennt. Fieber, Halluzinationen und Persönlichkeitsveränderungen sind für einige Infektionskrankheiten typisch, die das Gehirn in Mitleidenschaft ziehen.

Jackson provides more detail on the subject ('Unusual Mental States in Medieval Europe', p. 289):

Some cases of phrenitis may have been the temporary delirium we would associate with hyperthermic conditions, but, for the most part, our authors conceived of that separately as fever delirium. In modern terms, the diagnosis was probably applied to mental derangements associated with meningitis, encephalitis, meningoencephalitis, and some more generalized infections, and perhaps to some instances of delirium tremens.

<sup>50</sup> Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, p. 136. The term *alienatio mentis* was often used to describe a state of mental instability. As Fritz points out, it described only the symptom, not a disease (*Le Discours du fou*, p. 7):

De même, dans le discours médical, aucun terme nosographique ne réunit *frenesis*, *mania* et *melancholia*, si ce n'est celui d'*alienatio mentis* ('aliénation de l'esprit') qui désigne moins une maladie qu'un symptôme (*signum*).

Essentially, *phrenitis* and *lethargia* were illnesses which, by the involvement of the fever by which they were characterised, were as much acute diseases of the body as of the mind.

Whilst *phrenitis* was recognised by Galen and subsequent scholars as one of the three traditional forms of insanity, and was still viewed as such in the Middle Ages, it is the other two, *mania* and *melancholia*, which are of particular interest to our study. It is these less acute, far more protracted types of insanity which, as we shall see, seem to afflict Arthurian heroes. Whilst *phrenitis*, according to Galen, was easily identified by the presence of a fever, *mania* and *melancholia* were characterised by its absence:

In the writings of Galen of Pergamon (131-201) melancholia was clearly established as a chronic disease without fever. Following Hippocrates, he considered fear and sadness the basic symptoms; a particular, fixed delusion was common, though varying in content from person to person; some melancholiacs were misanthropic and tired of life, although not all wished to die and some even feared death; and some suffered from a specific type, *melancholia hypochondriaca*, which included a variety of gastrointestinal symptoms. Galen's writings contain only fragmentary passing comments regarding mania. As with melancholia, it was a chronic disease without fever, and the psychic functions were damaged; the condition might be a primary disease of the brain or one in which the brain was affected secondary to disease elsewhere. Mania was a pathological excitement caused by biting and hot humor, the yellow bile, in contrast to melancholia as a pathological dejection caused by a cold and dry humor, the black bile.<sup>51</sup>

Defined only by this lack of fever, *mania* and *melancholia* thus had the scope to embrace an almost limitless range of symptoms and manifestations:

La manie-mélancholie, au contraire, se caractérise d'abord par une absence (*sine febris*), et, même si l'humeur mélancolique est souvent en jeu, l'on a vu qu'elle ne s'offrait pas au regard médical sans une multitude de relais. Faute de symptômes limpides comme la fièvre, les *signa* vont être ainsi multipliés à souhait.<sup>52</sup>

Whilst these terms are not unfamiliar to the modern reader, their scope was sometimes wider than we would recognise:

The term 'melancholia' suggests modern syndromes of depression, and it certainly did designate cases of psychotic depression and probably other severe depressions, but it also

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<sup>51</sup> Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression*, p. 253.

<sup>52</sup> Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, p. 136.

referred to a variety of what would come to be called functional psychoses, including schizophrenia and manic-depressive psychoses; and probably some disorders now recognized as organic psychoses were included. Mania suggests that modern syndrome by that name, and seems to have included such states, but it very likely also subsumed various excited psychotic states without fever, some of which would be diagnosed as schizophrenia today and some as organic psychoses.<sup>53</sup>

*Mania*, for example, came to include a wide range of often vague symptoms:

La manie de l'époque féodale constitue donc, en fait, une entité protéiforme recouvrant des manifestations pathologiques nombreuses at parfois très imprécises, au sein desquelles reviennent le plus souvent une euphorie démesurée, un comportement violent, voire discordant, des hurlements, des propos sans suite, une audace sans bornes, une hyperactivité débordante, une hyperesthésie sensorielle pouvant aller jusqu'aux hallucinations et une excitation sexuelle intense.<sup>54</sup>

These behaviours and symptoms were characterised by an inappropriate excess of energy and agitation, 'a state of mental derangement associated with severe excitement and often wild behaviour'.<sup>55</sup>

Where the heat created by an excess of yellow bile caused the agitation and excitement of *mania*, an excess of black bile was responsible for *melancholia*. Black bile brought with it symptoms indicative of its dry and cold nature. Principle amongst these were fear and sadness:

Le couple 'crainte et tristesse' (*timor et tristitia*) est depuis longtemps reconnu comme le symptôme majeur; tous les auteurs l'évoquent ou en décrivent les manifestations.<sup>56</sup>

Coupled with the physical inertia of lethargy, the patient was often subject to bouts of severe anxiety, irrational fear, guilt, and other symptoms which today we would associate with depressive illness:

Melancholia came to mean fear and despondency, usually associated with aversion to food, sleeplessness, irritability, and restlessness; often associated with one or another particular delusion, with being misanthropic, and tired of life, and with costiveness<sup>57</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Jackson, 'Unusual Mental States in Medieval Europe', p. 289.

<sup>54</sup> Laharie, *La Folie*, p. 130.

<sup>55</sup> Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression*, p. 250.

<sup>56</sup> Laharie, *La Folie*, p. 132. This pairing was long since associated with *melancholia*, following the Hippocratic axiom 'if fear and sadness last a long time, such a state is melancholia' (Hippocrates, *Works of Hippocrates*, iv, ed. Jones, p. 185).

<sup>57</sup> Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression*, p. 250.

*Melancholia*, as with *mania*, was subject to differing levels of severity. At the less severe end of the scale, sufferers sought out the company of others in order to maintain a certain stability in their mind. In very severe cases, the opposite would apply:

Dans les formes graves, au contraire, 'l'amour de la solitude' est un symptôme constant: les malades cherchent à s'écarter des hommes dans des lieux de préférence obscurs; ils en arrivent à haïr leurs amis et leurs parents. Cette fuite représente la conséquence logique de leurs souffrances physiques et morales. Certains d'être coupables et indignes, ils restent alors prostrés, pouvant à peine ébaucher quelques mots, indifférents à tout, en apparence du moins.<sup>58</sup>

Such deep *melancholia* could of course also lead to self-harm and even suicide.

The separate diseases of *mania* and *melancholia* could be summarised thus:

Mania was predominantly a matter of excited states, delusions, wild behaviour, grandiosity, and related affects; and melancholia was primarily dejected states, delusions, subdued behaviour, insomnia, discouragement and fear.<sup>59</sup>

Whilst manic depression as we would understand it today was not recognised in the Middle Ages, medieval thought did not exclude all connection between the two diseases. A contemporary of Galen, Aretaeus of Cappadocia, was possibly the first to note a connection between the two forms of insanity:

It appears to me that melancholy is the commencement and a part of mania.<sup>60</sup>

On this basis, some medieval medical authorities suggested that the connection was:

that of melancholia as the earlier stage and milder form of madness, and mania as the later stage and more serious or advanced form.<sup>61</sup>

Thus the diseases were kept separate, yet could both affect the same individual.

The wide range and eclectic nature of the symptoms associated with these forms of insanity led to an equally varied range of treatments.<sup>62</sup> These had two main

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<sup>58</sup> Laharie, *La Folie*, p. 133.

<sup>59</sup> Jackson, 'Unusual Mental States in Medieval Europe', p. 252.

<sup>60</sup> Aretaeus the Cappadocian, *The Extant Works of Aretaeus the Cappadocian*, ed. and trans. by Francis Adams (London: Sydenham Society, 1856), p. 299.

<sup>61</sup> Jackson, *Depression and Melancholy*, p. 254.

<sup>62</sup> Laharie makes an extensive survey of these treatments (*La Folie*, pp. 201-40).

aims: firstly to treat the acute symptoms which presented the most immediate problems, secondly to restore reason to the afflicted mind:

Le traitement répond toujours à un double objectif: d'abord et surtout calmer les symptômes aigus (agitation et agressivité, ou, au contraire, prostration), car ils traduisent la souffrance du malade et peuvent représenter un danger pour son entourage; ensuite, tenter de lui rendre la raison en s'attaquant aux causes de l'alienation. Les moyens thérapeutiques mis en oeuvre sont donc nombreuses et variés.<sup>63</sup>

The humours, whose excess was believed to be at the root of the problem, were the target of many of the treatments:

Die krankhaften Säfte müssen daher ausgetrieben oder beruhigt werden. Hierzu wird das antik-mittelalterliche Therapie-Schema in voller Breite eingesetzt: die Diätetik, die Pharmazie und angedeutet auch die Chirurgie.<sup>64</sup>

Dietary restrictions were thought to help to control the excess of the relevant humour. Galen, for example, recommended that foods which were 'black' or 'bitter' in nature should be avoided by sufferers of severe *melancholia*, for whom an excess of black bile was the problem. Instead, they should chose foodstuffs of a warm or moist nature to counterbalance the dryness and coldness of the black bile:

Mit äußerster Strenge muß eine Ernährungsweise beobachtet werden, die alle *schwarzen* Fleischarten (Ziege, Rind, Esel, Kamel, Hase, Wildschwein, Fuchs, Hund usw.) untersagt; zu vermeiden sind auch Kohlarten, Linsen, Brot aus Kiele, dicke Rotweine, alte Käse. Wir können hier in allen ihren Konsequenzen eine Einteilung nach Qualitäten verfolgen, welche die Eigenschaften des «Schwarzen» und «Bitteren» als gesundheitsschädlich bezeichnet. Die dunklen scharfen Speisen verursachen die Ausdünnung, welche die Geister umnebelt. Derartige Nahrung ist im voraus mit Traurigkeit und Angst beladen. Man verwende Nahrungsmittel, die fröhlich, hell, jung, zart, reich an wohlthätiger Feuchtigkeit sind.<sup>65</sup>

Other physical interventions were aimed at the site of the problem itself: the head. In the most extreme cases, surgery to relieve the pressure caused by the excess humours in the brain was used:

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<sup>63</sup> Laharie, *La Folie*, p. 207.

<sup>64</sup> H. Schipperges, 'Melancholia als ein mittelalterlicher Sammelbegriff für Wahnvorstellungen', *Studium generale*, 20 (1967), 723-36 (p. 732).

<sup>65</sup> Starobinski, Jean, *Gechichte in Melancholiebehandlung von den Anfängen bis 1900*, Documenta Geigy Acta Psychosomatica, 4 (Basle: Geigy, 1960), pp. 28-30.



En dernier recours, il faut se raser les cheveux, qui sont déjà des superfluités condensées au contact de l'air; et certains médecins, comme Roger de Frugado, n'hésitent pas à préconiser la trépanation.<sup>66</sup>

Other less drastic treatments were also frequently applied to the head in the form of various concoctions, creams and ointments:

De nombreux onguents et emplâtres sont posés sur le front, les tempes ou la tête du malade mental, ce qui nécessite de lui raser la tête.<sup>67</sup>

Such an approach to relieve the illness could also account for the frequent depiction of the *fou* with the shaven or partially shaven head.<sup>68</sup>

These ointments and creams, along with other medication which was administered internally, often took the form of traditional remedies made from plants and herbs, usually with some kind of psychotropic element:

[Les médicaments] contiennent des substances soit spécifiquement psychotropes, soit valables également pour traiter d'autres maladies, et qui sont tirées des règnes animal, minéral et surtout végétal: les plantes médicinales, appelées 'simples', sont cultivées dans les jardins monastiques ou ramassées dans la nature. On fabrique ainsi des décoctions, infusions, électuaires, extraits, sirops, pilules, huiles, onguents, emplâtres, sternutatoires, passaires, suppositoires cataplasmes..., qui agissent sur la folie.<sup>69</sup>

Such medication had different aims and effects. Purgatives and emetics were administered to rid the body of the offending humour, and were prescribed for all types of insanity. Hellebore had been the treatment of choice since ancient times, as

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<sup>66</sup> Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, p. 43.

<sup>67</sup> Laharie, *La Folie*, p. 207, note 40.

<sup>68</sup> 'Autre signe extérieur de folie très répandu dans nos textes: celui qui a perdu la raison a normalement les cheveux tondus' (Ménard, 'Les fous dans la société médiévale', p. 436). Ménard goes on to describe the different styles of tonsure, along with some other possible reasons for the shaving of the hair, including the very practical measure of preventing the madman from pulling out his own hair and causing himself further damage (p. 439).

<sup>69</sup> Laharie, *La Folie*, p. 207. For a detailed description of the range and applications of such cures, see Laharie, *La Folie*, pp. 207-19, and also Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, pp. 140-41.

its emetic properties were violent and legendary, although its side effects could be unpleasant and even fatal.<sup>70</sup>

Medication of a narcotic nature was administered to those suffering the over-excited or agitated states of insanity:

Il convient de leur administrer des potions ou de leur mettre des onguents ou des emplâtres, à caractère soit sédatif, pour les calmer, soit même narcotique, pour les endormir.<sup>71</sup>

Opium, taken internally or applied in an ointment or poultice was a particular favourite for this purpose.<sup>72</sup> Stimulating mixtures were prepared for administration to those suffering the physical apathy associated with *lethargia* or *melancholia*, made from such ingredients as absinthe, cardamom, various other strong spices and herbs, pepper, rhubarb and vinegar.<sup>73</sup>

For the most part, sufferers of mental disturbance received these treatments within their close community:

Only a minority of persons who suffered from symptoms of mental disorder were ministered to by physicians. As in all times and all places, they were more commonly dealt with first, and often only, by those close to them - their families, friends, neighbors etc.<sup>74</sup>

Within this community, great care was often taken to ensure the rehabilitation of the victim, regardless of the severity of the condition:

Ses proches (famille élargie, voisins) non seulement le tolèrent, mais tentent de l'intégrer ou de le réintégrer dans une société avec laquelle il a rompu. On remarque avec intérêt que toutes les formes de démence, même les plus graves, bénéficient de cette tolérance et de cette assistance.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> 'Il s'agit, en fait, d'un émétique extrêmement violent et même toxique, puis qu'il entraîne, outre vomissements recherchés, des effets secondaires redoutables: spasmes, vertiges, voire même pertes de conscience; il est donc important de 'administrer avec prudence.' Laharie, *La Folie*, p. 215; see also Pigeaud, *La Maladie de l'âme*, p. 475.

<sup>71</sup> Laharie, *La Folie*, p. 208.

<sup>72</sup> See Laharie, *La Folie*, pp. 208-09, for a discussion of the preparation and application of opium and similar tranquillisers.

<sup>73</sup> For a comprehensive list of such remedies, see Laharie, *La Folie*, pp. 212-15.

<sup>74</sup> Jackson, 'Unusual Mental States in Medieval Europe', p. 262.

<sup>75</sup> Laharie, *La Folie*, p. 232.

Unlike in later centuries, which saw the growth of the mental asylum, public authorities rarely got involved with the care of the mentally ill:

During the medieval period, public authorities took only limited responsibility for the mentally deranged. Mentally or emotionally disturbed members of the community were left at liberty as long as they caused no public disturbance, custody of the mentally ill generally rested with their relatives and friends; only those considered too dangerous to keep at home, or who had no one to care for them, or who were actually socially disturbing, were dealt with by communal authorities.<sup>76</sup>

Of these two latter forms of insanity, *mania* and *melancholia*, it was sufferers of *mania* who formed the prevailing stereotype for the portrayal of *folie* in the Middle Ages. The extremely wide range of its symptoms, which were often of a violent and highly visible nature, led to *mania*, or 'la folie furieuse', providing the basis for many depictions of *folie* in literature:

En effet, les situations décrites dans les textes et montrées par l'iconographie renvoient, dans l'ensemble, à ce que les médecins de l'époque féodale appellent, comme on l'a vu plus haut, manie.<sup>77</sup>

This is also noted by Ménard, who proposes a possible reason for this:

Nos auteurs peignent habituellement des fous furieux, et non paisibles innocents. Nul hasard si les mots de *frenesie*, de *derverie*, de *forsenerie* sont employés. Le dément est un personnage qui fait du bruit et de l'effet. Un tranquille rêveur n'intéresserait pas autant qu'un *enragié*!<sup>78</sup>

Indeed, the wild and extravagant behaviour of the *fou furieux* or *maniac* would certainly seem to offer a greater source of interest than the withdrawn nature of the *melancholic*, although, as we shall see, authors did not completely ignore

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<sup>76</sup> George Rosen, *Madness in Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 139. Foucault adds that, even when the community chose to take action against the *fou*, he or she was still not totally excluded from society in the manner which later asylums would achieve, but allowed to inhabit its very fringes (*Folie et déraison*, p. 14):

la situation *liminaire* du fou à l'horizon du souci de l'homme médiéval - situation symbolisée et réalisée à la fois par le privilège qui est donné au fou d'être *enfermé* aux portes de la ville: son exclusion doit l'enclore; s'il ne peut et ne doit avoir d'autre *prison* que le *seuil* lui-même, on le retient sur le lieu de passage. Il est mis à l'intérieur de l'extérieur, et inversement.

<sup>77</sup> Laharie, *La Folie*, p. 160.

<sup>78</sup> Ménard, 'Les fous dans la société médiévale', p. 444.

*melancholia*. Even if contemporary authors did not portray *folie* strictly according to the medical textbooks, it is certainly possible to see both extremes are portrayed in literature, not least in one of the most famous Arthurian victims of *folie*, Yvain.

In his *Chevalier au Lion*, Chrétien de Troyes provides us with our first Arthurian *fou*: Yvain. Following rejection by the lady he loves, Yvain loses his mind and wanders wildly in the forest until he is found by a lady and her maids.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Medieval medical literature bears witness to the belief that love could cause such violent physical disruption in a sufferer that *folie* could result, an illness which came to be known as *amor heroicus*, or *hereos*. The process by which the sufferer's frustrated obsession with the object of love leads to a disruption of the physical humours and thus to the onset of this illness is described, for example, by Arnald of Villanova in the last quarter of the thirteenth century (see: Arnaldi de Villanova, *Opera medica omnia*, ed. by M.R.McVaugh (Granada: Seminarium Historiae Medicae Granatensis; Barcelona: Universidad de Barcelona, 1975-), iii: *Tractatus de amore heroico - Epistola de dosi tyriacalium medicinarum* (1985). For a cogent summary of Villanova's theory, see Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset, *Sexualité et savoir médical au moyen âge* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), pp. 117-18, and, by the same authors, 'L'amour héroïque à travers le traité d'Arnaud de Villeneuve', in *La Folie et le corps*, ed. by Jean Céard (Paris: Presses de l'École Normale Supérieure, 1985), pp. 143-58. See also: Laharie, *La Folie*, pp. 122-24; Huot, *Madness*, pp. 12-14). In 1914, J.L.Lowes wrote an extensive article which argued that it was this illness from which heroes of Arthurian romance such as Yvain, Tristan and Lancelot were suffering ('The Lovers Maladye of Hereos', *Modern Philology*, 11 (1914), 491-546). However, it has since been convincingly argued that indeed this is not the case, and that the Arthurian version of love-*folie* differs significantly from the medical definition of *hereos*, which argument is summarised by Fritz (*Le Discours du fou*, p. 296):

Par là même se mesure l'écart qui sépare la littérature du discours médical sur l'*hereos*: pour Arnaud de Villeneuve, l'amoureux devient fou, obsédé qu'il est par la personne aimée; la vertu estimative surestime l'objet aimé, ce qui entraîne un désordre de tout le corps. L'*hereos* naît d'une perversion du désir, la folie littéraire naît d'un regret douloureux de la dame, d'un *duel* et d'un deuil; le discours médical place la femme dans le futur, le discours romanesque la place dans le passé. Ici, la perte de la femme rompt un équilibre: Laudine absente, Yvain sombre dans la folie. Là, la présence de la femme désirée provoque et précipite l'*hereos*.

Judith Silverman Neaman's article, 'Eros and the Literati: Arthurian Transformations of Love Madness' (*Mid Hudson Language Studies*, 1 (1978), 18-34) presents this argument particularly clearly. Sylvia Huot is concerned more with the description than the diagnosis of various forms of *folie* in literature (see Huot, *Madness*, p. 2), and her fascinating and comprehensive discussion of the relationship between love and *folie* focuses on analyses of individual cases in terms of modern

Recognising him as the once great knight Yvain, they take pity on him, and use apply an ointment to the sleeping knight which cures him of his insanity. Yvain's *folie* is of particular interest, as he is one of the earliest examples of a medieval literary *fou*, and played an extremely influential role in the evolution of the depiction of *folie* in medieval literature. His presence can be felt across a wide range of texts:

Tous les écrivains du XIIIe siècle ont à l'esprit, sinon sous les yeux, le texte de Chrétien de Troyes: du *Lancelot en prose* à *Ysaïe le Triste*, les scènes de folie sont des réécritures de l'épisode du *Chevalier au Lion*. Réécriture ne signifie pas répétition ou imitation servile, mais variation par développement de certains motifs et insertion de thèmes nouveaux.<sup>80</sup>

He is of even more interest to this study in particular because of his role in the development of the depiction of *folie* in Arthurian romance. It is only in the light of Chrétien's work that Lancelot's, Tristan's and ultimately Daguenet's episodes of *folie* are written. As we shall see, the debt of the authors of those romances to the originality of Chrétien's Yvain will become very clear. Yvain's *folie* will be freely adapted by the author of the prose *Lancelot* to illustrate the strength of the hero's love for Guinevere, which will in turn be remodelled by the author of the prose *Tristan* when Tristan believes he is rejected by Iseut, all of which will influence the author of the *Guiron* in his treatment of Daguenet's *folie*:

Le récit initial de Chrétien de Troyes – la folie d'Yvain – se transforme au fil des discours sous l'action des discours contigus, des *folies Lancelot* aux *folies Tristan* dans le *Morois* et enfin aux *folies Daguenet*.<sup>81</sup>

Each author will bring their own ideas and innovations to the subject, whilst clearly building on the previous portrayals.

And so we turn more closely to Yvain himself. Having fallen in love with and married the beautiful widow Laudine, Yvain one day requests of his new wife

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psycho-analytical theory (Huot, *Madness*, pp. 97-179; see particularly her discussion of Tristan's *folie*, pp. 153-71).

<sup>80</sup> Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, p. 253.

<sup>81</sup> Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, p. 4.

permission to leave her for a while to pursue his knightly career and maintain his reputation:

Maintenant congié li requiert  
Mesire Yvains, de convoier  
Le roy et d'aler tournoier,  
'Quë on ne m'apiaut recreant.'<sup>82</sup>

She accedes to his request, but stipulates one condition: he must return within one year, otherwise her love for him will turn to hatred:

Ele respont: 'Jel vous creant,  
Le congié, jusc'a .i. termine.  
Mais l'amours devenra haïne,  
Que j'ai a vous, seür soiés,  
Chertes, se vous trespasïés  
Le terme que je vous dirai.'<sup>83</sup>

Once he has departed however, Yvain soon becomes involved in a series of tournaments and forgets his promise until it is too late. By this time, Laudine sends him a messenger to retrieve a ring she had given Yvain for his protection and to tell him that she wants nothing more to do with him:

Yvain, n'a maïs cure de toi  
Ma dame, ains te mande par moi  
Que jammais a li ne reveingnes  
Ne son anel plus ne detiengnes.'<sup>84</sup>

This news sends him into a torment whose symptoms are recognisable as those of *melancholia*. Everything he sees or hears causes him distress:

Et ses anuis tous jours li croist  
Et quanquë il voit li encroist  
Et quanquë il ot li ennuie.'<sup>85</sup>

His desire is to distance himself from all society, to get as far away from other people as possible:

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<sup>82</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, in Chrétien, *Romans*, ed. Zink, pp. 705-93 (ll.2558-61, p. 795).

<sup>83</sup> Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2562-67, p. 795.

<sup>84</sup> Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2767-71, p. 802.

<sup>85</sup> Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2781-83, p. 802.

Mis se voudroit estre a la fuie  
 Tous seus en si sauvage terre  
 Què on ne le seüst ou querre.<sup>86</sup>

He is filled with self-hatred:

Ne het tant riens com li meïsmes,  
 Ne ne set a qui se confort  
 De lui meïsmes qu'il a mort.<sup>87</sup>

Even those around him notice that he is no longer interested in their company:

Bien sevent que de lor parler  
 Ne de lor siecle n'a il soing.<sup>88</sup>

and he is able to slip away from them unnoticed.

Once he has departed, the wild and irrational behaviour of the *maniac* takes over. First, he rips off his clothes, and speeds off into the countryside:

Lors li monta .i. troubeillons  
 El chief, si grant què il forsenne;  
 Lors se desschire et se despenne  
 Et fuit par cans et par valees.<sup>89</sup>

He lives wild in the woods, killing animals and eating their flesh raw:

Les bestes par le bois aguete  
 Et lors ochist, et si menjue  
 La venoison trestoute crue.<sup>90</sup>

He continues to live in this manner until he comes across a small hut in which lives a hermit. This hermit, seeing the state of Yvain, immediately recognises him as *fou*:

Et tant conversa el boscage  
 Comme hom forsenés et sauvage  
 C'une maison a .i. hermite  
 Trouva, mout basse et molt petite.  
 Et li hermites essartoit.  
 Quant vit chelui qui nus venoit  
 Bien puet savoir sans nul redout  
 Qu'il n'avoit mie le sens tout.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2784-86, p. 802.

<sup>87</sup> Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2790-92, p. 802.

<sup>88</sup> Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2800-01, p. 803.

<sup>89</sup> Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2804-07, p. 803.

<sup>90</sup> Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2824-26, p. 804.

The hermit takes pity on Yvain and shares with him his provisions, in return for which Yvain brings the hermit fresh meat. Eventually, Yvain is discovered in the woods by two damsels, who recognise him and are deeply distressed by the state which he is in. They rush back to their lady to describe what they found:

Mais plourant a sa dame dist:  
 'Dame, j'è ay Yvain trouvé,  
 Le chevalier mix esprouvé  
 Del mondë, et mix entichié;  
 Mais je ne sai par quel pechié  
 Est au franc homme mecheü.  
 Espoir aucun duel a eü  
 Qui le fai ainsi demener,  
 C'on puet bien de duel forsener;  
 Et savoir et veoir puet l'en  
 Que il n'est mie bien en son sen.<sup>92</sup>

Fortunately, the lady has in her possession an ointment to cure such illnesses – 'nule rage/ N'est en le teste qu'il n'en ost'<sup>93</sup> – which she gives to her maid. The girl applies it to Yvain, who recovers his mind:

Les temples et le vis l'en froie  
 Et tot le cors juc'a l'orteill.  
 Tant le froia au caut soleil,  
 Les temples et trestout le cors,  
 Que du chervel l'en issi hors  
 Le rage et le melancolie.<sup>94</sup>

And so we can see how this depiction of insanity reflects quite closely the contemporary understanding of *folie* in terms of *mania* and *melancholia*. We saw above how some medieval authorities considered *melancholia* a 'milder' form of *folie* which could become the prelude to the far more destructive *mania*.<sup>95</sup> This would certainly seem to have been the case for Yvain: first he sinks into a deep depression,

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<sup>91</sup> Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2827-34, p. 804.

<sup>92</sup> Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2920-30, p. 807.

<sup>93</sup> Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2954-55, p. 808.

<sup>94</sup> Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.3000-05, p. 808.

<sup>95</sup> See notes 60 and 61.



rejecting the world around him for the solitude of the forest, where his depression turns to frenzy. Certainly, the descriptions of Yvain's behaviour matches the symptoms of the two illnesses we looked at above. There are even resonances within the text of the popular methods of curing such an illness. The application of the ointment to Yvain, and particularly to his head, recalls Laharie's observation that it was common practice to apply ointments and poultices to the head of such a patient,<sup>96</sup> although there is also a hint that this ointment may have more than purely natural properties, as it originally came from Morgan le Fée.<sup>97</sup>

But as well as Yvain's behaviour itself, it is useful to consider briefly the vocabulary associated with the two distinct phases of Yvain's *folie*, as here we will find the basis of a whole language with which *folie* will be described and identified in the later romances. Upon his recovery, the narrator indicates that Yvain had been suffering the two forms of insanity we identified above: the wild excited form of *mania*, which is identified as *rage*, and its depressive prelude, *melancholie*.<sup>98</sup> This latter condition had been described in terms of the extreme distress that Yvain suffered – he is left with 'grant anui'<sup>99</sup> on the departure of the messenger from Laudine, and can find no comfort for the self-loathing that he feels. It is only once he is cured by the ointment that this dark period is identified as being a form of insanity: *melancholie*.

However, for the second and more conspicuous phase, once Yvain has abandoned court, it is made clear from the outset of his wild and violent behaviour that Yvain's plight is the result of insanity. Chrétien uses a variety words and phrases

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<sup>96</sup> See note 67.

<sup>97</sup> The lady says of the ointment: 'Car d'un onguement me souvient / Que me donna Margue la sage'. (Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2952-53, p. 808).

<sup>98</sup> Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, l.3005, p. 810.

to indicate his character's condition which, in subsequent romances, will form the basis of a familiar language used to identify loss of sanity in its various forms. We have already seen how the narrator identified this frenzy as *rage*, a graphic evocation of the irrationality of Yvain's behaviour which is used on three occasions during the episode.<sup>100</sup> This wildness is also reflected in the range of similar associated terms employed in this way, including *demener*,<sup>101</sup> *sauvage*,<sup>102</sup> *tempeste*,<sup>103</sup> and particularly in the use of *forsener*, which is used at the very beginning to signify Yvain's sudden descent into *mania*, and appears on four further occasions in various forms.<sup>104</sup>

Whilst these terms point to the agitated, wilder behaviour induced by the *mania* Yvain suffers, various other collocations appear which identify him as *fou* without actually specifying the nature of that *folie*. Most simply refer in one form or another to insanity in its most basic form - losing one's right senses: 'il n'avoit mie le sens tout';<sup>105</sup> 'tant poi de sens ait';<sup>106</sup> 'il n'est mie bien en son sen',<sup>107</sup> 'së il n'eüst le sens perdu'.<sup>108</sup> These terms, basically indicating a deviation from normality, refer to the lack of the sense which would allow a normal person to control their behaviour,

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<sup>99</sup> Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, l.2780, p. 802.

<sup>100</sup> 'Tant comme il fu en chele rage' (Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, l.2869, p. 805); 'Li hosterons nous de la teste / Toute la rage et la tempeste' (Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2949-50, p. 808).

<sup>101</sup> 'Espoir aucun duel a eü / Qui le fait ainsi demener / C'on puet bien de duel forsener' (Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2926-28, p. 807).

<sup>102</sup> 'Et tant conversa el boscage / Comme hom forsenés et sauvage' (Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2827-28, p. 804). See note 91.

<sup>103</sup> See note 100.

<sup>104</sup> 'Lors li monta .i. troubeillons / El chief, si grant quë il forsenne' (Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2804-05, p. 803); 'Comme hom forsenés et sauvage' (Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, l.2828, p. 804); 'Pour l'omme forsené repaistre' (Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, l.2878, p. 806); 'C'on puet de duel forsener' (Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, l.2928, p. 807).

<sup>105</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, l.2834, p. 804.

<sup>106</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, l.2865, p. 805.

<sup>107</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, l.2930, p. 807.

rather than the effects of that loss, which could range anywhere on the manic-depressive scale. As such, they could apply equally to the agitated state of *mania* and to the withdrawn and paralyzing *melancholia*, and, as we shall see, will indeed become amongst the most frequent terms used to describe either or both states of insanity.

The use of one further term in this context is worth noting. Following the application of the ointment, Yvain is described as recovering not just his senses, but also specifically his memory:

Si fu garis et repassés,  
Et rot son sens et son memoire.<sup>109</sup>

Memory is linked to insanity in that, when someone loses their senses, they become someone different to their normal self, losing their identity, forgetting who they really are.<sup>110</sup> Yvain has forgotten himself: he has ceased to be the ‘chevalier mix

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<sup>108</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, l.2933, p. 807.

<sup>109</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.3018-19, p. 810.

<sup>110</sup> This close connection between *folie* and identity, both personal and communal, is at the heart of Huot’s work, (*Madness*, p. 1):

The onset of madness is a corruption of identity, a dislocation: the madperson is ‘hors du sens’, ‘outside’ of his or her rational faculty. As depicted in medieval French literature, the mad are severed both from the defining framework of their own lives, their own memories, and governing faculties of intellect; and from the shared framework of the community, of language, of mutual role-playing and interaction. They become so unlike themselves, so absent from themselves, that they cannot be recognized, sometimes even by their closest associates. No identity can be conceived without some mark of difference from others, but the mad are different in an absolute sense, a troubling presence that is ultimately a sign of an even more troubling absence: an irreducible and inaccessible Otherness.

The loss of memory is an integral factor in the ‘effacement of personal identity’ (p. 4) entailed by the onset of *folie* (p. 6):

The many factors that make up a sense of identity – body, memory, personal experience, behaviour, self-presentation, the perceptions of others – come apart and cease to function coherently in representations of madness.

In terms of Daguenet, however, the question of personal identity does not seem to arise. Huot notes instead the role of Daguenet’s *folie* in the affirmation of the communal identity of the court of King Arthur (p. 53):

espruvé / Del mondë'<sup>111</sup> and become instead 'hom forsenés et sauvage'.<sup>112</sup> In recovering his senses and therefore his memory, he can once again become the knight he once was. The use of this expression here is particularly worth noting, because, as Fritz observes, in the medieval romances we shall be looking at, loss of memory is often used as a signpost for insanity:

La folie est d'abord léthargie, oubli; et une des expressions les plus courantes de nos romans pour désigner la *forsenerie* est bien de cet ordre: 'perdre la mémoire'.<sup>113</sup>

Thus Yvain's *folie* seems to reflect a contemporary understanding of the symptoms and perhaps also the treatment of insanity as an illness. But whilst he is the first in a line of such portrayals in medieval Arthurian literature, Chrétien's Yvain is also part of a much earlier tradition, that of the literary 'wild man'. By the thirteenth century, when our romances were written, the portrayal of the literary *fou* had become closely entwined with that of the 'wild man'. Indeed, Bernheimer notes that:

To the Middle Ages wildness and insanity were almost interchangeable terms; and that, for Malory for instance, 'wylde' is synonymous with what we call mad or frenzied.<sup>114</sup>

Indeed, as we have seen, this was already true of Chrétien, who describes Yvain as 'hom forsenés et sauvage'.<sup>115</sup> This wildness describes not only the frenzied

Arthur's knights define themselves around the two poles of perfection and imbecility, and Daguenet reassuringly embodies the flaws and failings that the knights of the Round Table have distanced from themselves.

It is interesting to note that, whilst indeed most characters such as Lancelot and Tristan become unrecognisable, lose their own identity as a result of *folie*, for Daguenet the converse is true. He is unique in that, as Fritz says, his identity is *folie* (see note 4). As we shall see in Chapter Five, Daguenet's identity only comes into question when the existence of his defining *folie* is in doubt.

<sup>111</sup> Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2922-23, p. 807.

<sup>112</sup> See note 102.

<sup>113</sup> Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, p. 132.

<sup>114</sup> Richard Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages: A Study in Art, Sentiment and Demonology* (New York: Octagon, 1952; repr. 1970), p. 12. This book provides an excellent detailed study of the figure of the wild man and its reception in the Middle Ages.

manner of his behaviour, but what he actually does. His first action is to rip his clothes to shreds and tear them off, leaving him as naked as any of the animals among which he runs, giving him the appearance of wildness.<sup>116</sup> He lives wild, in the forest, away from civilisation, living amongst the beasts and as a beast. This regression to a bestial state is epitomised by his eating habits: he hunts, and, having caught his prey, eats the flesh raw:

Les bestes par le bois aguete  
Et lors ochist, et si menjue  
La venoison trestoute crue.<sup>117</sup>

The origins of such wild behaviour in literature stretch far back into the history of the wild man of early literature, myth and folklore. Whilst such wild men are not necessarily portrayed as insane, many are, and many of the traits of this character, particularly those of appearance and behaviour, were inherited by the medieval literary *fou*, such as Yvain.

Often cited as its earliest ancestor of this literary wild man is the biblical Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>118</sup> In the Old Testament, King Nebuchadnezzar was punished by

<sup>115</sup> See note 102.

<sup>116</sup> 'Lors se desschire et se despenne' (Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, l.2806, p. 803); the hermit recognises Yvain as mad because of his nakedness: 'Quant vit chelui qui nus venoit / Bien puet savoir sans nul redout / Qu'il n'avoit mie le sens tout' (Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2832-34, p. 804).

<sup>117</sup> Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll.2824-26, p. 804. The eating of raw flesh is symbolic of the wild state into which Yvain has descended. As Jacques le Goff and Pierre Vidal-Naquet note in their consideration of Yvain's time in the forest ('Lévi-Strauss en Brocéliande: esquisse pour une analyse d'un roman courtoise', in *Claude Lévi-Strauss: textes de et sur Claude Lévi-Strauss*, ed. by Raymond Bellour and Catherine Clément (Paris: Gallimard, 1979), pp. 265-319), it highlights the contrast between the wildness of world he has entered and the civilisation of that which he has left: 'monde de la chasse et monde des terres cultivées, cru et cuit' (p. 282). The ethnological and sociological symbolic value of such empirical oppositions is explored by Claude Lévi-Strauss in *Le Cru et le cuit*, *Mythologiques*, I (Paris: Plon, 1964).

<sup>118</sup> Whilst this appears a convincing source for the developing literary tradition, D.A. Wells (*From the 'Epic of Gilgamesh' to Hartmann von Aue's 'Iwein': Reflections on the Development of a Theme in*

God for the sin of overweening pride, and was exiled into the wilderness. There he displays many of the characteristics which would later become familiar in portrayals of the wild man, such as living amongst beasts, eating as a beast, and sporting excessive hair:

Cumque sermo adhuc esset in ore regis, vox de caelo ruit: Tibi dicitur Nabochodonosor rex:  
Regnum tuum transibit a te, et ab hominibus eiicient te, et cum bestiis et feris erit habitatio tua: foenum quasi bo comedes, et septem tempora mutabuntur super te, donec scias quod dominetur Excelsus in regno hominum, et cuicumque voluerit, det illud.

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*World Literature* (Belfast: The Queen's University, 1975)) proposes an even older one, that of an ancient poem, the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (for an edition of this poem, see *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, trans. by Maureen Gallery Kovacs (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989). The *Epic of Gilgamesh* probably dates back to the third millenium BC, and supplies both our earliest known epic poem and the earliest analogue to the wild man of biblical and medieval tradition (Wells, *The Wild Man*, p. 12). The *Epic of Gilgamesh* begins with Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, a selfish and greedy ruler who exploits his people for his own gratification. When the population complains to the gods, they send Enkidu, a match for the king's superhuman qualities. Enkidu grows up in the wilderness, oblivious of man and living amongst the wild beasts. Gilgamesh sends a girl to lure him into civilisation, which she manages to do through her sexual wiles, after which she anoints him with an ointment and clothes him. Upon arrival in society, Enkidu cements a firm friendship with Gilgamesh with a fight, and the pair embark upon an adventure in the forest where they slay the powerful giant Hunbaba. As a punishment for Gilgamesh's rejection of the amorous advances of the goddess Ishtar, the gods decree that Enkidu should die. On his death bed, he curses civilisation, and has a vision of (Wells, *The Wild Man*, p. 14):

The dismal man-bird, the messenger of death, a composite animal, part lion and part eagle, which together with these real beasts perhaps lies behind the comparable creatures in the vision of Daniel and in medieval iconography.

After Enkidu's death, Gilgamesh goes into a rage, during which his hair grows long and he too takes up the life of the wild man. Eventually, he embarks upon a search for eternal life which ends in failure.

This epic clearly shares several motifs with the story of Nebuchadnezzar, along with others which will also become familiar in later literature: the hirsute wild man (in both Enkidu and Gilgamesh); his isolation from society; communing with nature or the beasts; anointing with ointment to precipitate entry into society; the ultimate rejection of civilisation (by both Enkidu and Gilgamesh); animal symbolism. Despite the nearly four thousand years between this and the medieval romances, these motifs, individually and as an overall picture, will be identifiable in later portrayals of the wild/mad man.

Eadam hora sermo completus est super Nabucodonosor, et ex hominibus abiectus est, et  
foenum ut bos comedit, et rore caeli corpus eius infectum est: donec capilli eius in  
similitudinem aquilarum crescerent, et unguis eius quasi avium.<sup>119</sup>

The earliest wild man connected with Arthurian material is Geoffrey of Monmouth's Merlin, whom we meet for the first time in the *Vita Merlini*.<sup>120</sup> Geoffrey creates in this poem a very different figure to the figure of Merlin as magician which emerged from his *Historia* and influenced his portrayal in subsequent Arthurian romance. In the *Vita Merlini*, Merlin is a renowned British king and prophet. It begins with a very bloody battle between Peredur, prince of the North Welsh and Gwenddolau, ruler of Scotland, in which Merlin and three of his brothers fought. The three brothers were killed, and Merlin grieves bitterly for them in the bloody aftermath. After three days he is overcome by *folie* and flees into the woods:

Inde novas furias cum tot tantisque querelis  
aera complexisset cepit furtimque recedit  
et fugit ad silvas nec vult fugiendo videri,  
ingrediturque nemus gaudetque latere sub ornis

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<sup>119</sup> Daniel 4: 28-30:

But before I could finish speaking, a voice from heaven interrupted: "King Nebuchadnezzar, this kingdom is no longer yours. You will be forced to live with the wild animals, away from people. For seven years you will eat grass, as though you were an ox, until you learn that the God Most High is in control of all earthly kingdoms and that he is the one who chooses their rulers." This was no sooner said than done - I was forced to live like a wild animal: I ate grass and was unprotected from the dew. As time went by, my hair grew longer than eagle feathers, and my fingernails looked like the claws of a bird.

<sup>120</sup> This was one of two accounts involving Merlin written by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the 12th century. He first appeared in the *Historia Regum Britanniae* and has provided the basis for Merlin's portrayal in Arthurian romance in the years since (see Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, trans. and ed. by Lewis Thorpe (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966)). For this account, Geoffrey exploited the story of Ambrosius found in Nennius's *Historia Brittonum*, a boy prophet credited by Nennius with a wide range of mainly political prophecies, to create what was basically a suitably supernatural background for his hero, Arthur (see Nennius, *British History and the Welsh Annals*, trans. and ed. by John Morris (London: Phillimore, 1980)). Merlin is instrumental in the conception of Arthur as he disguises Uther Pendragon with his magic, who is then able to enter Tintagel and sleep with Gorlois' wife, Igraine (p. 207).

miraturque feras pascentes gramina saltus.  
 Nunc has insequitur, nunc cursu preterit illas.  
 Utitur herbarum radicibus, utitur herbis,  
 Utitur arboreo fructu morisque rubeti.  
 Fit silvester homo quasi silvis deditus esset.  
 Inde per estatem totam nullique repertus  
 oblitusque sui cognatorumque suorum  
 delituit silvis obductus more ferino.<sup>121</sup>

Merlin in his *folie* becomes a 'silvester homo' – a wild man of the woods. This *folie* is characterised by several familiar motifs: rejection of/exile from society; fleeing into the woods; living amongst the beasts; eating what nature provides; regression to wild state; forgetting his own identity.<sup>122</sup> If we compare this with the picture of Yvain which we saw above, we can see how the portrayal of the wild man begins to merge with that of the *maniac*. The aggressive, violent behaviour of the *forsené* which we looked at above reflects both the contemporary perception of *folie* but also recalls the uncivilised bestial state of the wild man of tradition: Yvain's *folie* illustrates the synthesis of the two.

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<sup>121</sup> Basil Clarke, trans. and ed., *Life of Merlin /Vita Merlini* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1973), p. 56, (ll.72-83). Clarke provides the Latin text with an English translation on the facing page (p. 57):

Then, when the air was full with these repeated loud complainings, a strange madness came upon him. He crept away and fled into the woods, unwilling that any should see his going. Into the forest he went, glad to lie hidden beneath the ash trees. He watched the wild creatures grazing on the pasture of the glades. Sometimes he would follow them, sometimes pass them in his course. He made use of the roots of plants and of grasses, of fruit from trees and of the blackberries in the thicket. He became a Man of the Woods, discovered by none, forgetful of himself and of his own, lurking like a wild thing.

<sup>122</sup> Merlin's sister Ganiada sends a minstrel to woo him back to court with songs of the suffering of herself and Guendoloena, his wife. This has a great effect on Merlin, and he returns with her to court. However, he cannot bear the crowds at court and soon chooses to return to his life in the woods. Before Rodarchus will let him leave, he forces Merlin to reveal the reason for a sudden burst of laughter aimed at Rodarchus's wife. The prophet then reveals that she has been unfaithful. Once he has returned to his life in the woods, he spends much of his time in self-contemplation and prophesy until he is cured of his madness by water from a spring. Following his now 'rational' decision to continue in the woods, he is eventually joined by his sister and wife, in a move which seems to confirm the superiority of this way of life.



As I mentioned earlier, Yvain's *folie*, whilst on the one hand providing the inspiration for the portrayal of *folie* across the whole range of thirteenth century romance,<sup>123</sup> is most closely linked to two other famous examples, Lancelot and Tristan, and ultimately, Daguenet. In each we find the major elements of Yvain's plight: the loss (or perceived loss) of a lady;<sup>124</sup> the descent into *melancholia*, the flight into the woods and the onset of a wild frenzied *mania*. But none is simply a repetition of the previous one: each brings its own angle, its own interpretation and development of the themes and motifs.

In the prose *Lancelot*, for example, the difference is immediately obvious: instead of one episode of *folie*, Lancelot suffers three. The first incident is brief but violent. Shortly after he and Guinevere have spent their first night together, Lancelot and some of his companions are taken prisoner.<sup>125</sup> Separated from the lady with whom he has so recently consummated his love, Lancelot follows Yvain's descent into *folie*. First, he sinks into a *melancholia*, refusing to eat or drink and unable to find comfort in anything:

Or dist li contes que Lancelos est laiens tex conreés que il ne boit ne ne menjue por nul confort que l'en li face et fait tel duel a jornee que nus ne le puet conforter.<sup>126</sup>

before he too is overtaken by the frenzy of *mania*:

Et il ot la teste wide, si li est monté une folie et une rage el chief si durement que nus ne puet a lui durer.<sup>127</sup>

The violence of his *folie* is such that he is released for fear of harming the other prisoners. Once free, he flees immediately back to the palace where his mistress

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<sup>123</sup> Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, l.2828, p. 804. See note 91.

<sup>124</sup> On the relationship between love and *folie*, see note 79.

<sup>125</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.8, LXXa, §§39-40, pp. 447-48.

<sup>126</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.8, LXXIa, §1, p. 452.

<sup>127</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.8, LXXIa, §1, p. 452.

abides. There he is discovered by the queen and the Lady of the Lake, in whose care he gradually recovers his senses.

Whilst this first *folie* seems to last only a few days, the second is more extended. Although the precise cause of this *folie* is not made clear, it seems that again the loss of his love plays a part. This second episode of *folie* takes place following another enforced physical separation from Guinevere. Lancelot is held prisoner by Morgain, where he has a nightmare in which the queen betrays him.<sup>128</sup> He appears to be deeply affected by this nightmare and, convinced that the betrayal was true, he returns to Sorelois in search of comfort from his close friend Galehout. However, when he arrives to find Galehout absent from court, the strain is too much for him:

Et quant il vint en Sorelois, si fu receus a trop grant joie, mais de Galehout ne trova il mie, kar il s'en estoit alés entre lui et Lionel por lui querre. Et lors fu Lancelos tos desvés ne ne gardoit l'ore qu'il forsenast, quant il ne savoit a cui conforter et totes les joies que l'en li faisoit li desplaisoient.<sup>129</sup>

This time, he remains in this state for the whole of the summer and winter:

Or dist li contes que, quant Lancelos se parti de Sorelois en emblé et il fu hors de la terre, si fist duel chescun jor et menja petit et dormi. Si li wida la teste si qu'il forsena et fu en tel maniere tot l'esté et tot l'hiver jusqu'al Noël et ala par totes terres menant sa forsenerie.<sup>130</sup>

Lancelot is found by the Lady of the Lake, who takes him in and cures him:

Après le Noël avint que la dame del Lac qui le norri l'aloit querant par totes terres, si ala tant demandant noveles et encherchant enseignes qu'ele le trova la veille de la Chandelor

<sup>128</sup> Morgain gives Lancelot a potion, which induces a nightmare designed to make him hate Guinevere (*Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.1, XXXI, §§6-7, p. 369-70):

Si li a mis poisons en son beivre qui furent confites a conjurement et a charies: si li troblerent la cervelle tant que la nuit li fu avis en son dormant qu'il trovoit la roine sa dame gisant avec un chevalier. Et il corut a s'espee, si li voloit ocire, quant la roine sailloit sus et disoit: 'Lancelos, que volez cest chevalier ocire? Ne seez ja si hardis que i metois la main, kar je sui soe. Et gardés que jamés, si chier com vos avez vostre cors, ne venés en liu ou je soie.' Ensi le fist Morgue songier por lui fere haïr la roine.

<sup>129</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.1, XXXIV, §1, p. 387.

<sup>130</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.2, XXVI, §1, p. 1.

gisant en un buisson en la forest de Tintajuel en Cornouaille. Si l'en amena et le gari et le tint avec li tot l'iver et le karesme.<sup>131</sup>

Although this narrative gives us very little to go on, it seems that again, Lancelot's despondency, contributed to by his perceived loss of Guinevere and the absence of comfort from Galehout, has caused a descent into *mania*, which is signalled by the use of *forsener*. The episode is notable for the extension of the length of time that Lancelot suffers before he is cured, from a matter of days to a few months, forming a progress from the extremely brief first episode to the much longer final bout of *folie*.

In fact, Lancelot's third episode of *folie* seems to last the course of several winters.<sup>132</sup> It is the most interesting of the three, not just because it is the longest chronologically, but because the narrative provides more detail concerning the nature and effect of the *folie*, much of which had been all but glossed in the previous episodes.

In this last episode, we will be able identify many of the elements key to Yvain's *folie*, and we can clearly see how the author has taken this original episode and developed it in his own way, how he has adapted it for his own purposes. For example, the distinction between the initial *melancholia* and the subsequent *mania*, so clearly illustrated in Yvain's case by the flight into the forest and the wildness of appearance and behaviour which suddenly overtakes him, will be less clear-cut in the case of Lancelot. The cause of Lancelot's *folie* mirrors that of Yvain: both are brutally rejected by their love. Lancelot is again the victim of malign influences, as

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<sup>131</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.2, XXVI, §1, p. 1.

<sup>132</sup> From the information concerning the sequence of seasons given in the text, Fritz calculates that it lasts four winters (Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, p. 257, note 4).

he is tricked into sleeping with the daughter of King Pellès, Helaine. Discovering the pair together in bed, Guinevere banishes Lancelot forever from her sight:

Ha, lerres, traîtres desloiaux qui en ma chambre et devant moi avez faite vostre ribaudie,  
fuez de ci, si gardez que vos ne viengniez jamais en liu ou je soie.<sup>133</sup>

However, while the melancholic Yvain remained at court for a while following his rejection, lamenting his fate, Lancelot's reaction to the rejection is immediate flight into the forest:

Quant il oit cest conmandement, si ne volt plus mot dire, ainz s'en vait ainsi come il estoit,  
sanz vesteure nule, et vient en la cort aval et s'adrece vers le jardin et entre enz et s'en vait  
toute une voie tant que il vient as murs de la cité et s'en ist fors par une posterne.<sup>134</sup>

It is only once he has put this distance between himself and Camelot that we learn of the depth of his despair and detect the symptoms of *melancholia*, including uncontrollable sobbing and suicidal thoughts:

Lors conmanche a dolouser et a maudire cele aventure qui tant li a esté cruel et felonnesse,  
qui jusqu'a cel point d'ore a esté li plus beneurez hom dou monde, et or est a ce venuz que  
le remanant de sa vie li couvendra user em plors et en lermes et en toute maleurté . Et  
ceste chose li met tel duel en son cuer que il voldroit bien estre morz, ne li chaut androit de  
quel mort.<sup>135</sup>

This obsession with death grows until he is actually running through the forest, inviting death to take him there and then:

Atant se fient Lanceloz en la forest criant: 'Mort, mort, haste toi de venir a moi, car je sui de  
vivre touz rasasiez.'<sup>136</sup>

Thus we can see how the boundaries between *melancholia* and *mania* begin to blur: although his sobbing and desire for death reflects *melancholia*, the manner in which he comports himself owes more to the wild behaviour of the *maniac*, as he runs shouting through the forest. It is therefore of little surprise when we are finally informed that he has indeed lost all his senses:

<sup>133</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol. 6, CV, §37, p.175.

<sup>134</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.6, CV, §37, p. 176.

<sup>135</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.6, CV, §37, p. 176.

<sup>136</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.6, CV, §38, pp. 176-77.

Si em perdi le sens si outreement qu'il ne savoit qu'il faisoit.<sup>137</sup>

In fact, two factors which seem to mark Yvain's transition from *melancholia* into *mania* seem instead to mark for Lancelot the onset of the whole episode of *folie*. Lancelot flees to the forest and takes on the appearance of a wild man almost before he has even sunk into despair. Whilst admittedly he is already in a state of undress when he flees the palace - having been caught in bed - once he reaches the forest, he wastes little time in compounding the uncivilised nature of his appearance, tearing at his face and hair:

Quant Lanceloz fu hors de Kamaalot, et il li souvint de sa dame et des granz joies qu'il en ot eues maintes foiz, et or l'en couvendra souffrir et traire maux et anuiz et travaux, si veissiez home courocié et faire duel mervilleus et errachier ses chevex qui tant estoient biaux et esgratiner sa face si que li sans an saut de toutes parz.<sup>138</sup>

Finally, nature makes her own contribution, as the effects of the sun and wind render him virtually unrecognisable:

Si fu em poi d'ore tainz et noirs del souleil et del halle et fu empiriez de ce qu'il travilloit trop et mengoit petit: si fu tex atornez, ainz que li premiers yvers passast, qu'il n'est home, qui devant l'eust veu et le veist lors, qui jamais l'antercast por Lancelot, s'il ne l'avisast mout.<sup>139</sup>

Thus, where in the *Chevalier au Lion* the appearance and behaviour associated with the tradition of the wild man are clearly attributed to Yvain in the grips of *mania*, the author of the *Lancelot* has extended this to include both the *melancholic* and the *manic* phase. It denotes even the earliest onset of *folie*, the first hints of Lancelot's illness, accompanying the *melancholia* which heralds the subsequent *mania*.

Of the violence of his eventual *mania* there is little doubt, and this is very clearly illustrated by an episode during which Lancelot comes across an encampment

<sup>137</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.6, CV, §38, p. 177.

<sup>138</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.6, CV, §37, p. 176.

<sup>139</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.6, CVII, §1, p. 207.

in the forest. Outside one pavilion hangs some armour: Lancelot picks up the sword and begins to bash it against the shield for no particular reason:

Lanceloz vient cele part et resgarde l'escu et saisist l'espee et la trest del fuerre. Et quant il l'a traite, si conmance a ferir granz cops sus l'escu et fait autel noise conme se .X. chevalier se combatissent ensamble et depiece l'escu et empire moult durement come cil qui ne connoist que il fait.<sup>140</sup>

Attracting the attention of the occupants of the pavilion, he is challenged by a dwarf, whom Lancelot simply throws aside:

[Lancelot] l'aert par les epaules et le gete en sus de lui si felonnessement que a poi que il ne li a le col brisié.<sup>141</sup>

When the dwarf's master, a knight called Bliant, tries to stop him, Lancelot treats him with similarly unprovoked violence:

Et Lanceloz hauce l'espee, si tost com il le voit aprochier de lui et le fiert si durement que l'espee depiece en .II. parties.<sup>142</sup>

As a result, or perhaps in spite of this violent encounter, Bliant decides to take Lancelot into his own care and try to cure him of his *folie*. Despite his best efforts, he is unsuccessful, and it is not until Lancelot runs away and finds himself at the Grail Castle, Corbenic, that he is finally cured by the magic power of the Holy Grail.<sup>143</sup>

And so we can see in each of Lancelot's three *folies* clear reference is made to the themes and motifs of Yvain's *folie*: the involvement of the lady, the *melancholia*, the *mania*. The third and longest *folie* is particularly interesting not only because it has the scope to develop the further elements, such as the wild appearance of the *fou*, but because this also shows how indistinct are the boundaries between the two types of *folie*, as the wild man motif extends across them both.

<sup>140</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol 6, CVII, §2, pp. 207-08.

<sup>141</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol. 6, CVII, §2, p. 208.

<sup>142</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol. 6, CVII, §4, p. 209.

<sup>143</sup> Once it is brought to his attention by his daughter that it is Lancelot that they are sheltering, King Pelles decides to use the power of the Holy Grail to try to cure him. See below, note 148.

The language of *folie* used in the prose *Lancelot* also reflects a continuity with the episode in the *Chevalier au Lion*. As we saw with Yvain, the predominant description of Lancelot's *folie* in all of the episodes is in terms of losing his 'sens': 'si em perdi le sens';<sup>144</sup> 'fors del sens';<sup>145</sup> 'hors del sens';<sup>146</sup> 'hors de son sens'.<sup>147</sup> *Forsener* is also frequently used to describe the frenzy of *mania*, and again reference is made to the loss of *memoire* as a definition of insanity. This is used in conjunction with *sens*, as it had in the *Chevalier au Lion*, but also on its own. When Lancelot is cured of his final and longest *folie* by the Holy Grail, his cure is described in terms of the recovery of his *memoire*:

Au soir, quant il furent laienz couchié, le fist le roi porter el Palais Aventureux et l'i laissierent tout seul sanz compaignie d'autre gent, car bien pensoient que par la vertu dou Saint Graal, si tost com il venroit el palais, garroit Lanceloz et revanroit en son mimore. Et avint ainsi com il le penserent, car quant le Sainz Graax vint el palais, si com il soloit, maintenant fu gariz Lanceloz.<sup>148</sup>

Most interesting perhaps in terms of vocabulary is the use of the word *folie* itself. This term had been absent from Chrétien's description of Yvain's insanity, and indeed Fritz notes that it was only at the beginning of the thirteenth century that it became associated with the *manic* behaviour we have been looking at: 'Le mot *folie* lui-même ... peut désigner dès cette époque la folie furieuse, comme dans le *Lancelot en prose*.'<sup>149</sup> This development is most clearly illustrated when Lancelot

<sup>144</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.6, CV, §38, p. 177.

<sup>145</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.6, CVII, §2, p. 208; §4, p. 209; §5, p. 210; §7, p. 211; §12, p. 217; §20, p. 218; §22, p. 219; §27, p. 222.

<sup>146</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.8, LXXIa, §3, p. 453.

<sup>147</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.8, LXXIa, §3, p. 453.

<sup>148</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.6, CVII, §30, p. 224.

<sup>149</sup> Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, p. 9. He notes that until that point, a distinction had been made between the *forsené* and the *fol*. Whilst Yvain in his *mania* could be characterised as *forsené*, *fol* at that time designated one of five quite separate categories: 'insensé, déraisonnable'; 'sot, stupide, ignorant'; 'inconvenant, malhonnête, mauvais'; 'coupable, pécheur, révolté contre Dieu'; and the professional *fou de cour* (Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, p. 8).

loses his mind for the first time,<sup>150</sup> where the juxtaposition of *folie* and *rage* confirms the extension of the scope of *folie* to encompass these symptoms of insanity, a conclusion supported by the copious recurrence of the term throughout Lancelot's three episodes.

So we can see how Lancelot's *folies* build on the foundations laid by Chrétien, multiplying the incidences, varying their length, developing motifs yet clearly remaining indebted to the earlier portrayal. The same process is true of the next knight to follow along this path towards *folie*, Tristan. Although we will be looking at his *folie* in more detail in Chapter Three, it is worth noting briefly a few salient points here.

Tristan suffers only one episode of *folie*, which, like Lancelot's third, lasts a considerable length of time.<sup>151</sup> Believing himself betrayed and rejected by his love, King Mark's wife Queen Iseut, the desperate Tristan takes himself away into the forest.<sup>152</sup> Initially, he shows many symptoms of *melancholia*: rejecting all signs of his courtly life in the form of his armour, lamenting his plight and wishing himself dead:

Quant il se fu grant piece dementez, plorant et lermoiant mout tendrement, il se desarma, et giete son heaume d'une part et s'espee d'autre, et dit a soi meismes que jamés a jor de sa vie armes ne portera, ne jamés autre chose ne fera fors mener duel; et de celi fera il tant qu'il covient qu'il en muire prochenement. Riens ne li plest fors que la morz, car en autre maniere, si com il dit, ne porroit il asoagier sa dolor se par morir non.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> See p. 48.

<sup>151</sup> Emmanuèle Baumgartner (*Le 'Tristan en prose': essai d'interprétation d'un roman médiéval* (Geneva: Droz, 1975), p. 123) notes the similarities between the *folies* of Lancelot and Tristan, remarking that the author wrote the Tristan episode 'en s'inspirant scrupuleusement, pour décrire cette tragique période de la vie de son héros, des différentes frénésies de Lancelot, et notamment de la dernière'.

<sup>152</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, iii, §842, p. 145.

<sup>153</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, iii, §852, p. 154.



For Tristan, this period is particularly long and protracted, and is described in detail by the narrator.<sup>154</sup> He encounters two people, his old friend Fergus, and a messenger from another friend, Palamedes, both of whom do their best to cheer him up, but to no avail. He refuses to eat or drink, and occupies himself crying and singing melancholy songs. One night, in his anguish, he composes the *Lai Mortel*, which recounts the tragic tale of his lost love. However, singing it brings him no comfort, and in fact seems to precipitate his descent into *mania*:

Quant il avoit son lai finé de dit et de chant en tel maniere com je vos ai devisié, si bel, si doucement que nus ne l'en poist blasmer, il se test tout maintenant que plus ne dit; et recomence son duel ausi grant com il avoit fait autre foiz, et dist: 'Diex, que vois je ci atandant? Por quoi ne m'ocie je maintenant? Si fust adonc a un sol cop ma dolor finee.' Et en ce qu'il disoit cele parole, il se dresce en son estant et regarde tout entor li por savoir s'il poist espee trover dom il s'oceist. Et quant il voit qu'il ne le puet faire, il li vient au cuer une si grant rage et une si grant forsenerie en la teste qu'il en pert tout sens et le memoire si plenement qu'il ne set qu'il fait.<sup>155</sup>

It is in this wild state of *folie* that Tristan comes face to face with another *fou*, Dagenet, a meeting which marks the beginning of Tristan's gradual return to civilisation and sanity, and which I shall look at in detail in Chapter Three.

Like Yvain and Lancelot before him, Tristan's *folie* contains the three main elements we listed above; the lady, the *melancholia* and the *mania*. For Yvain, Lancelot and Tristan *folie* is an illness, precipitated by the *choc affectif*<sup>156</sup> of the loss of their lady love.<sup>157</sup> The victims, who have already proved themselves great knights, demonstrate symptoms of both *melancholia* and *mania* as understood by contemporary society, mixed to a greater or lesser extent with elements drawn from the ancient tradition of the wild man, before they are cured and return to their former

<sup>154</sup> It occupies *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, iii, §§ 842-71, pp. 145-73.

<sup>155</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, iii, §871, ll.1-12, p. 173.

<sup>156</sup> Laharie notes (*La Folie*, p. 146):

Dans plusieurs romans de l'époque, le fou était antérieurement un être normal qui bascule plus ou moins brusquement dans l'aliénation mentale. Cette entrée dans la folie est déclenchée par un choc affectif important aux effets traumatisants.'

selves. As we shall see, Daguenet himself will follow in these footsteps in *Guiron le Courtois*, where we learn that he too was once a great knight, who fell ill following the loss of his wife, and whose subsequent *folie* is clearly a development of the tragic tales of his illustrious predecessors.

So to return to the question that we asked so long ago, how do we reconcile these two accounts of *folie*? What is the connection between the entertaining *fou de cour* and this portrait of the *fou-malade*, tragic victim of illness? Are they mutually exclusive? Does the author of the *Guiron* go too far in asking us to believe that Daguenet fulfils both roles? Or are the two merely different sides of the same coin? Certainly the vocabulary does not help us to make a distinction between the two. As we saw above, by the time the prose *Lancelot* was written, *folie* and *fol* had come to apply to both the *fou de cour* and the *fou-malade*:

Ce sont les mêmes termes qui, dans le langage courant, désignent le fou-malade mental et le fou de cour: *folius*, *stultus*, *fatuus*, *insipidus* en latin; *fol* en ancien français et en ancien provençal.<sup>158</sup>

So, whilst as a title ‘le fol’ might indicate that Daguenet plays the role of *fou de cour* for Arthur, it does not rule out the possibility that he is also a *fou-malade*.

This possibility is given further credence by the fact that the two important *fous-malades* whom we have looked at – Lancelot and Tristan – both also take up the role of *fou de cour* in some form at some point during their illnesses. For Lancelot, this occurs upon his arrival at Corbenic. Having run away from the home of Bliant, who had taken pity on Lancelot and cared for him, Lancelot arrives at the Grail Castle, Corbenic. There King Pelles and his barons take pity on the *fou*, and he is given food, clothes and shelter, whilst Lancelot’s antics in return entertain his benefactors:

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<sup>157</sup> See note 79.

<sup>158</sup> Laharie, *La Folie*, p. 272.

Et ensi sejourna illec tout l'iver et tout l'esté après; si n'i ot onques celui qui le reconneust, si le veoit sovent li roys et li autre baron, si avoient souvent grant joie et rioient adés de ses folours qu'i li veioient faire. Et on li donnoit souvent des vieses reubes as sergans et as escuiers, pour ce que si paisivle le veioient.<sup>159</sup>

In this guise he remains at Corbenic until the daughter of the king recognises Lancelot for the great knight that he is and he is cured by the Holy Grail.

In the prose *Tristan*, Tristan too ends up at the court of a king – that of King Mark at Tintagel – where he is able to remain for while without being recognised.<sup>160</sup> Whilst hunting, Mark comes across Tristan with some shepherds in the Morois forest. Recognising that Tristan is a *fou*, one of the king's companions suggests that he should be taken back to Tintagel for their own entertainment:

Et Audret dist adont au roi: 'Sire, se Diex me consaut, je vauroie k'il s'en venist avoeuc nous a Tyntajol: assés nous porriom deduire de ses folies.'<sup>161</sup>

This they do, and Tristan's antics do not merely entertain the king, but endear him to Mark. Not only does Mark take pleasure in the things which Tristan gets up to, but the pity which is aroused in him for this *fou* is so great that he cannot bear to see others mistreat him:

Quant li rois March, ki trop volentiers se juoit de ses folies et après savoit con grant force il avoit en lui, voit que cascuns l'encauce en tel maniere, il ne le vuet mie souffrir que on li face trop grant felonnie ne trop grant cruauté devant lui.<sup>162</sup>

Just as Lancelot's deeds won him the sympathy of those who saw him, so too Tristan receives similar treatment. For Tristan, lover of the queen, the sympathy he inspires

<sup>159</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.6, p. 276. This forms part of an appendix to the main text, therefore does not follow the normal numbering.

<sup>160</sup> This incident is not to be confused with the situation found in the *Folies Tristan* which we looked at above, in which Tristan's *folie* was feigned. Of course, in the *Folies Tristan de Berne*, the suggestion is clearly that Tristan is in fact teetering on the brink of madness.

<sup>161</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §187, ll.34-36, p. 274.

<sup>162</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §188, ll.19-23, p. 275.

in Mark is particularly ironic, an irony which is soon highlighted when Mark discovers Tristan's true identity and banishes him from Cornwall.<sup>163</sup>

These two incidents highlight two important factors. Firstly, they confirm that, for the thirteenth century romance writer at least, there was no doubt that a *fou-malade* could also play the role of *fou de cour*, and in such cases: 'le fou de cour n'est qu'un fou sauvage apprivoisé.'<sup>164</sup> These episodes provide the author of the *Guiron* with two prestigious precedents to give credence to his transformation of Daguenet, *fou de cour*, into Daguenet, *fou-malade*.

But these episodes also highlight the potential contradiction between the two portrayals of *folie*, a contradiction which lies not with the behaviour of the *fou* himself, but in the attitude of those around him. As we noted above, the role of the *fou de cour* was 'de faire rire et de divertir'.<sup>165</sup> His *folie* is a source for entertainment and amusement, with little thought for the plight of the *fou* himself. In the *Folie Tristan d'Oxford*, for example, Mark is quite happy to enjoy the apparently insane ramblings of Tristan as long as it suits him, but as soon as the king tires of it, he simply leaves:

Li reis s'en rit a chascun mot,  
Ke molt ot bon deduit del sot.  
Puis cummande a un esqüier  
K'i li amenet sun destrier;  
Dit k'i aler dedure volt  
Cum a custume faire solt.<sup>166</sup>

<sup>163</sup> It is when Tristan's dog, Husdent, recognises him that Mark learns the true identity of the madman (*Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §188, l.30, p. 276). It is interesting to note that even once he knows who Tristan is, Mark first makes sure he has recovered from his *folie* before he exiles him from his kingdom (*Tristan*, ed. Ménard, §189, ll.14-17):

Quant mesire Tristrans fu garis, li rois March le fist puis revenir devant lui et li fist jurer sour  
sains k'il s'en iroit dedens .XII. jours hors de Cornuaille ne jamais n'i retourneroit a nul jour.

<sup>164</sup> Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, p. 32.

<sup>165</sup> See note 9.

<sup>166</sup> 'Folie Tristan' d'Oxford, ll.533-38, p. 258.

Tristan is simply used, exploited for his entertainment value with no thought or sympathy for the *fou* himself, and abandoned when the fun is over. A similar attitude will be frequently demonstrated towards Daguenet.

But this is in stark contrast with the attitude towards the *fou-malade*. Lancelot and Tristan during their distress both experience great sympathy and pity from many of those whom they encounter. Most remarkable, for instance, is Bliant, who, despite the violence Lancelot shows towards him, takes in Lancelot and cares for him:

Enon Dieu, fait li chevaliers, ja se Diex plaist mal ne li ferai, ainz le retendrai o moi, se je puis, tant qu'il sera gariz et respassez. Et se je le pooie fere, je sai bien que je an seroie encore serviz et honorez de plusors genz, car se je onques connui home por ferir, cist est bons chevaliers, por quoi je n'avrai jamais joie devant que je l'aie mis a l'aide de Dieu en son droit sens, ainz qu'il se parte de moi.<sup>167</sup>

Indeed, Bliant's words demonstrate not only the sympathy that he has for Lancelot's plight, but also that he expects, and even assumes, that others will share this same sentiment.

Tristan too is subject to the sympathy of those who experience his predicament. Following his initial flight into the woods, his friend Fergus and a messenger from Palamedes attempt to console the melancholic Tristan. While this could perhaps be understood as acts of love and loyalty between friends, Tristan later meets a hermit who owes him no such loyalty, yet takes great pity on him. Even when Tristan, in a frenzy following his violent encounter with Daguenet which we shall look at later, storms towards the hermit's hut, demanding food and causing the hermit to shut himself indoors for fear of his life, the benefactor remains sympathetic:

Mesire Tristrans, si esragiés et si forsenés com il estoit, quant il est venus devant la maison du preudome, il demande tout maintenant a mengier et crie, tant com il puet: 'Home,

<sup>167</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.6, CVII, §5, p. 210.

donne moi a mengier!' Li preudom, ki mout grant pitié en avoit, oeuvre esranment une petite fenestre et li donne du pain a plenté.<sup>168</sup>

If we look at the episodes in which Lancelot and Tristan, *fous-malades*, themselves become temporary *fous de cour*, we find that these attitudes are drawn together. Both heroes are exploited by their hosts for their entertainment value, yet at the same time both also benefit from the pity of hosts who go out of their way to care for them and protect them. This highlights the ambiguous nature of the *fou* in medieval romance. Although it is useful and informative to understand both the *fou-malade*, whose temporary insanity is brought on suddenly and is most vividly characterised by the victims wild and frenzied behaviour, and the *fou de cour*, an individual whose behaviour, for whatever reason, provides entertainment at court, it is also important to recognise that the two cannot and should not be understood in isolation:

Parler de césure entre fou sauvage et fou de cour relève donc du schématisme. Parlons plutôt d'échanges constants de l'un à l'autre. Le bouffon a fait l'expérience de la sauvagerie, et le fou sauvage peut très bien faire office de fou de cour.<sup>169</sup>

Whilst this 'échange' is already evident from what we have already seen of Lancelot and Tristan, their roles as *fous de cour* are admittedly merely brief phases in a much larger picture of their *folie*. It is only with Daguenet that we find a character for whom both aspects are equally important. Unlike Tristan and Lancelot, whose *folies* are over and done with in one romance, Daguenet has the luxury to evolve and develop over the course of the thirteenth century. He is in a unique position, able to absorb and reflect a wide spectrum of behaviours in a variety of environments and situations.

<sup>168</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §171, p. 252.

<sup>169</sup> Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, p. 32.

On the one hand, Daguenet belongs to the ranks of the *fou de cour*: object of entertainment and amusement, a role which will be particularly explored in the prose *Tristan*. By the time we reach the *Guiron*, however, we are presented with a character whose story, that of a great knight who loses his mind following the loss of his lady, promotes him alongside those whom he once entertained, Tristan and Lancelot. The evolution of the story of his *folie* has caused him to be raised from object of fun to object of respect. It is this evolution that this study will seek to trace.

But perhaps more interesting even than exact nature of his *folie* at each of these stages is the role which Daguenet plays in each of the romances. After all, there must be a reason that this relatively innocuous character is chosen to reappear in several of the greatest medieval romances. That most of his appearances take place opposite some of the best known characters in these romances – Lancelot, Tristan, King Arthur and King Mark – can surely only increase the interest in him. Is he merely a side show, a lighthearted distraction from the more serious subject of the romances, a good idea simply copied from one author to the next? Or is there something about his character, its freedom and flexibility which catches the imagination of authors, who are able to exploit him for more serious and significant narrative roles belied by the apparent superficial nature of the *fou*? As we shall see, there is certainly very little to laugh about in the episodes in *Guiron le Courtois* and the *Prophécies de Merlin*.

In order to address these questions coherently, I shall trace Daguenet's appearances in the chronological order in which they were written. The unequal length of the chapters devoted to each reflects the growth in length and importance of these episodes. This alone is testimony to the growing importance that the writers attached to him, and to the interest that he must have aroused not only in the writers,

bur also, of course, in the readers of those great romances. So let us now turn to the prose *Lancelot*, where we shall find our very first introduction to Daguenet le Fol.



## Chapter Two

### *Daguenet in the prose 'Lancelot'*

Our first encounter with Daguenet is in the prose *Lancelot*:<sup>1</sup> a brief episode which, at first sight, may seem something of an *hors d'oeuvre*, and in which one might be forgiven for seeing Daguenet as no more than one of the numerous knights whom Lancelot encounters as he grows to be the greatest knight of Arthur's kingdom. Certainly, there is little to lead us to believe that Daguenet will become a player not just in this, but in a number of the great prose romances of the thirteenth century. And yet, I believe, in this short episode, we can find all the elements which clearly caught the imagination of contemporary writers, and which make Daguenet not just a bit-player, but an important contributor to the stories of Lancelot and Tristan, and in the romances of *Guiron le Courtois* and the *Prophécies de Merlin*.

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<sup>1</sup> The prose *Lancelot* is the earliest of the romances we shall be looking at. Its precise date of composition is a subject of complex debate, as Elspeth Kennedy explains (*Lancelot do Lac: the Non-Cyclic Old French Prose Romance*, ed. by Elspeth Kennedy, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) ii, pp. 41-45. However, it seems to be agreed that evidence exists to show it was already in existence by 1226 (see: Alexandre Micha, *Essais sur le cycle du Lancelot-Graal* (Geneva: Droz, 1987), p. 12; *Lancelot do Lac*, ed. Kennedy, ii, pp. 41-42). In any case, it is generally accepted that it was composed before the prose *Tristan*, for which it was without doubt an important source, and this justifies its position in this study. See, for example, Colette-Anne Van Coolput's excellent study *Aventures querant et le sens du monde: aspects de la réception productive des premiers romans du Graal cycliques dans le 'Tristan' en prose* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986), which demonstrates ways in which aspects of the *Lancelot-Grail* cycle (see note 2) were integrated into the composition of the prose *Tristan*.

Daguenet appears approximately halfway through the first part of the prose *Lancelot*.<sup>2</sup> Following an account of his childhood, Lancelot arrives at Arthur's court, where he is knighted by the queen. The young knight then leaves court and embarks upon a series of adventures in order to earn his name and his knightly reputation. He undertakes these adventures incognito, and his exploits, including excelling as the

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<sup>2</sup> The prose *Lancelot* forms a part of a much longer cycle, commonly referred to as the *Lancelot-Grail* or the *Vulgate* cycle. The first modern edition of the whole of this cycle was produced by H.Oskar Sommer at the beginning of the twentieth century: H.Oskar Sommer, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances*, 7 vols (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1908-1916; repr. New York: AMS Press, 1969). The prose *Lancelot* comprises vols 3, 4 and 5 of this work (*Lancelot del Lac*, parts 1, 2 and 3). Since then two further editions of the prose *Lancelot* have appeared: *Lancelot do Lac*, ed. Kennedy, and *Lancelot: roman en prose du XIIIe siècle*, ed. by Alexandre Micha, Textes Littéraires Français, 9 vols (Geneva: Droz, 1978-83). Kennedy argues that there exist two different versions of the romance, a cyclic version, equating to volumes three, four and five of Sommer (*Lancelot del Lac*, parts 1-3), which contains material relating to the Grail which links the romance to the others of the *Lancelot-Grail* cycle; and an earlier, non-cyclic version, which equates to volume three of Sommer's edition (*Lancelot del Lac*, part 1) and recounts Lancelot's childhood, education and knightly adventures up to his installation as Knight of the Round Table: see Kennedy, *Lancelot and the Grail*, pp. 5-9. It is the 'non-cyclic' version which she reproduces in her edition. Micha's edition contains the longer 'cyclic' version. Our episode occurs approximately halfway through volume three of Sommer (*Lancelot del Lac*, part 1), and is thus contained in material common to both versions, with no significant variation. As I shall be referring to Micha's edition elsewhere in this study, it is from his edition that I shall quote in this chapter.

For further discussion, including the complex manuscript tradition and the ongoing debate concerning the versions of the prose *Lancelot* and the *Lancelot-Grail* cycle, in addition to the editions mentioned above, see the following: Ferdinand Lot, *Étude sur le Lancelot en prose* (Paris: Champion, 1954; first publ. Paris: Champion, 1918); Elspeth Kennedy, 'The Two Versions of the False Guenevere episode in the Old French Prose *Lancelot*', *Romania*, 77 (1956), 94-104; Jean Frappier, 'The Vulgate Cycle', in *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages: A Collaborative History*, ed. by Roger Sherman Loomis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), pp.295-318; Jean Frappier, *Étude sur le Mort le roi Artu*, 3rd edn (Geneva: Droz, 1972; first publ. 1936); Kennedy, *Lancelot and the Grail*; Micha, *Essais sur le cycle du Lancelot-Graal* and the following articles also by Alexandre Micha: 'La tradition manuscrite du *Lancelot en Prose*', *Romania*, 85 (1964), 291-318 and 478-517; 86 (1965), 330-359; 'Les manuscrits du *Lancelot en Prose*', *Romania*, 81 (1960), 145-187; 84 (1963), 28-60 and 478-99; 'Tradition manuscrite et versions du Lancelot en prose', *Bulletin Bibliographique de la Société Internationale*

best knight at four Assemblies and under four different guises, capture the interest and admiration of Arthur and his knights.<sup>3</sup> It is shortly before the third Assembly that our episode takes place.

Daguenet first appears in a strange encounter on a riverbank:

N'ot gaires alé quant il[Lancelot] rencontre Daguenet le Fol qui li demande ou il vait et il  
pense, si ne dist rien.<sup>4</sup>

This is the first mention of Daguenet in any romance, so the question is immediately raised as to who he is. His name would indicate some connection with *folie* – as we have seen, for the medieval audience, his sobriquet ‘le Fol’ would probably recall the character of the *fou de cour*, the individual whose *folie* was exploited for the amusement of the court.<sup>5</sup> But what business would such a character have with Lancelot, the young knight who is travelling through the kingdom on a quest to earn his knightly reputation?<sup>6</sup>

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*Arthurienne*, 14 (1962), 99-106; ‘La tradition manuscrite du *Lancelot* en prose: les deux versions du *Lancelot* en prose’, *Romania*, 87 (1966), 194-233.

<sup>3</sup> These Assemblies of Logres are arranged along the lines of tournaments, in which Arthur and his knights take on their enemies. The first two, (*Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XXIVa and XLIIa) form part of an ongoing war with the Roi d’Outre les Marches. The third and fourth Assemblies (*Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7XLIXa and LIIa) are waged against Galehout, who threatens to invade Logres. Lancelot appears at each under a different guise, variously as the White, Red or Black Knight. For a detailed discussion of the role of these Assemblies in the prose *Lancelot*, see Elspeth Kennedy, *Lancelot and the Grail*, pp. 89-107.

<sup>4</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §7, p. 445.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter One, pp. 12-22.

<sup>6</sup> As Kennedy notes (*Lancelot and the Grail*, p. 10), the quest for identity was a frequent theme in medieval romance, and the prose *Lancelot* was no exception:

One of the recurring themes in twelfth-century romance is the identity theme. A young man has to discover who he is, to make his name (sometimes in the most literal sense) through his exploits as a knight, or an older knight has to prove his right to a reputation won in the past, or recover a good name which he has lost. This theme, under its various aspects and in relation to a range of characters who provide a counterpoint to the development of Lancelot’s quest for identity, runs right through the *PL*.

This episode takes place very early in Lancelot’s knightly career, shortly after the Second Assembly, the second tournament at which Lancelot has excelled himself, and before Lancelot and Guinevere

This mystery deepens with the almost surreal events which follow. This is not simply a brush with one of the many random knights who suddenly appear then disappear almost as quickly in the course of the lengthy romance. When Daguenet receives no answer to his enquiries, he takes the rather drastic action of attempting to take Lancelot prisoner. But what is most shocking is that he encounters no resistance:

Et Daguenés dist: 'Je vos preng', si le ramaine et li chevaliers n'i met desfense nule.<sup>7</sup>

Until this point in the romance, Lancelot has been in the process of making his name as a knight.<sup>8</sup> Having been knighted at Camelot, he set off to earn his reputation, and, incognito, he has excelled at two tournaments. Although those within the romance who have witnessed his exploits are unaware of his true identity, the reader is well acquainted with Lancelot's knightly prowess. This sudden lapse, when he apparently offers no resistance against his captor, is consequently all the more surprising for its sharp contrast with his previous achievements.

Who is this Daguenet, that he is able to take prisoner so easily a knight who has already proved himself so able? Is the sobriquet 'le Fol' perhaps some ironic allusion to his knightly skills, which are in fact so great that even Lancelot would not dare to defend himself? Is something distracting Lancelot so strongly that he is not even aware of Daguenet's actions, or is Lancelot simply not the excellent knight we have been led to believe?

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meet in secret for the first time. Throughout this time, his name is unknown to those around him, although Gauvain undertakes a quest to discover his identity (see Kennedy, *Lancelot and the Grail*, pp. 26-30). It is only at the secret meeting with Guinevere that Lancelot finally admits to his name for the first time (*Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.8, LIIa, §106, pp. 108-09).

<sup>7</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §7, p. 445.

<sup>8</sup> See note 6.

Some clue is to be found in the reaction of the witnesses to these bizarre events. Lancelot's encounter with Daguenet takes place in full view of both the queen Guinevere and Yvain, and their reaction confirms that Daguenet's success is certainly not the usual state of affairs. Seeing that Lancelot has been taken prisoner by another knight, Yvain approaches the ford to discover the identity of the captor, where he is astounded to find it is Daguenet:

Lors vait mesire Yvains encontre au gué et quant il seït que chou est Daguenés, si en est trop esbahis.<sup>9</sup>

The queen expresses her surprise in the question she then puts to Daguenet:

'Daguenet, fait la roïne, par la foi que vous devés mon signor le roi, comment le pristés vous?' 'Je l'encontrai,' fait il, 'lonc chele rive, si ne me vaut dire mot et jel pris au fraim ne onques ne se desfendi, si l'en amenai tout pris.'<sup>10</sup>

Daguenet's simple reply reflects the simplicity with which the feat was accomplished. His words describe no more and no less exactly what happened, and reiterate the incongruity of the scene. For Guinevere and Yvain, this incongruity lies in the fact that Daguenet has managed to capture any knight, even though they do not know who this prisoner is. For the reader, this incongruity is compounded by the fact that this is not just any ordinary knight, but a knight who, by his exploits and successes, is beginning to prove himself one of the best knights in the kingdom.

And so, through this little exchange, we learn more about Daguenet. Although he is completely unknown to the reader, he is clearly very familiar to the court, as demonstrated by the way that Yvain and Guinevere immediately recognise him. Their surprise that he has taken a prisoner further indicates that he is not normally to be found in this role. This is perhaps also reflected by Yvain's next move, when he

<sup>9</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §7, p. 445.

<sup>10</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §7, p. 445-56.

offers to take Lancelot into his own care on Daguenet's behalf, an offer which Daguenet readily accepts:

'Issi,' fait mesire Yvains, 'puet il bien estre et je l'ostagerai, se vous volés.' 'Che veil je bien',  
fait Daguenés, et la roine s'en rist moult et chil qui l'oent, car ja i avoit venu assés  
chevaliers et dames et damoiseles.<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, it seems it is not just Guinevere and Yvain whose interest is aroused by the sight of Daguenet with a prisoner, but a small crowd of courtiers has also been drawn to see what is going on. Their hearty laughter illustrates how absurd they find what they witness and highlights the comedy of the whole improbable scene.<sup>12</sup>

An explanation for this hilarity is soon forthcoming, as the narrator now intervenes with a detailed explanation of this mysterious character. In no uncertain terms, he confirms that Daguenet, although he is a knight, is not a knight as we would recognise one, as he is both *fou* and a coward:

Chil Daguenés estoit chevaliers sans faille, mais il estoit fols nâis et la plus coarde pieche  
de car que l'en seust.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §7, p. 446.

<sup>12</sup> Kennedy characterises Daguenet's involvement with Lancelot at this point as 'comic interlude... [a] series of events in which the comic side is emphasized' (Kennedy, *Lancelot and the Grail*, p. 30-31). Fritz differs slightly in his view of Daguenet's role: 'la dimension comique y est certes présente, mais elle n'est pas essentielle' (Fritz, 'Daguenet, ou le bouffon amoureux', p. 45). Although there is little doubt that this scene is essentially comic in nature, I will show that Daguenet's involvement has far more significance than as a mere comic distraction.

<sup>13</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §8, p. 446. The precise meaning of *fols nâis* would appear to be rather elusive when we consider the possible modern equivalents—*niais*, *né* or *naïf*—each of which would throw a slightly different light on the nature of Daguenet's *folie*. However, both Tobler-Lommatzsch (Adolf Tobler and Erhard Lommatzsch, *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch: Adolf Toblers nachgelassene Materialien bearbeitet und mit Unterstützung der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften herausgegeben von Erhard Lommatzsch*, 11 vols (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1925-1943; Wiesbaden: Frank Steiner, 1951-2002)) and Godefroy (Frédéric Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'ancien langue française et de tous ses dialectes du IXe au XVe siècle*, 10 vols (Paris: Vieweg, 1880-1902)) class *nâis* (Tobler-Lommatzsch, vi, p. 479) / *nais* (Godefroy, v, p. 465) as a variation of *nâif* / *naïf*, meaning 'geburtig, von Natur bestehend, natürlich' / 'natif, né, naturel, caractère naturel', and thus I am led to concur with Fritz (*Le Discours du fou*, p. 269), whose

Within the first sentence of the description the narrator encapsulates the contradiction which is Daguenet. He juxtaposes the assertion that Daguenet is ‘chevaliers sans faille’ with the description of his nature ‘fols naïs’ and ‘la plus coarde pieche de car’. How can he be both? Surely these qualities – *folie* and cowardice – are the very antithesis of knighthood? Certainly those who know Daguenet do not take him seriously. For them, he is merely a source of entertainment, whose outlandish antics and improbable stories amuse his audience in the manner of the *fou de cour*:<sup>14</sup>

Si se jouoient de lui un et autre por les grans folies qu’il faisoit et qu’il disoit, qu’il aloit  
aventures querant et disoit au revenir qu’il avoit ochis .I. chevalier ou .II. ou .III., et por chou  
fist il si grant los de chestui.<sup>15</sup>

This now explains the reactions of the queen and her companions to Daguenet’s capture of Lancelot. The sight of this *fou*, whose knightly adventures usually belong to the realms of fantasy and entertainment, so easily taking a prisoner and bringing him back to court as if it were the most natural thing in the whole world, understandably provokes incredulous laughter.

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interpretation is that the collocation indicates that Daguenet’s *folie* is a permanent part of his nature, present from birth:

Cependant, sa [Daguenet’s] folie, à la différence de celle d’Yvain, Lancelot ou Tristan, ne sera pas une simple péripétie, mais un état définitif, presque une seconde nature (en ce sens, il est bien un *fols naïs*).

This interpretation would seem to be supported by a very brief appearance made by Daguenet in the *Estoire de Merlin*. In this romance, he is described as ‘fols estoit par nature’ (*The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances: edited from the manuscripts in the British Museum*, ed. by H.Oskar Sommer, 7 vols (Washington: Carnegie, 1908-1916), ii: *Lestoire de Merlin* (1908), p. 322, l.9). As several accompanying details included in the same description seem to be lifted almost verbatim from the prose *Lancelot*, it would seem fair to conclude that this too is the author’s direct interpretation of the collocation ‘fols naïs’.

<sup>14</sup> See Chapter One, note 8.

<sup>15</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §8, p. 446.

Until this point, the narrative has focussed on Daguenet and the incongruity of his actions. Now however, the queen draws our attention back to the prisoner, Lancelot. Firstly, she notes his excellent physical condition:

La roine regarde le chevalier, si le voit bien taillié de cors et de membres que nus ne peust estre miex tailliés.<sup>16</sup>

Once again, the discordant nature of the recent events is highlighted. The superlative nature of this description indicates that Daguenet has managed to capture not just any knight, which in itself would seem to have been unusual, but a knight of quality. Her curiosity aroused, the queen enquires if Daguenet knows the identity of his captive:

'Daguenés,' fait la roine, 'par la foi que vous devés mon signor le roi et que vous me devés, savés vous qui il est?' 'Dame,' fait il a la roine, 'issi m'aït Diex, nenil, ne il ne parla onques a moi nis .l. seul mot.'<sup>17</sup>

Daguenet's over-determined negative response emphatically underlines Lancelot's silence.

But Guinevere's question does also provoke a response from Lancelot, although not a verbal one. The sound of her voice rouses Lancelot briefly, but only long enough to cause him to drop his lance, which falls and tears the queen's robe:

Li chevaliers tenoit sa lanche par mi le travers et com il oï la roine parler, si drecha le chief, et la main li lasque et sa lanche li chiet si que li fers passa le samit del mantel la roine.<sup>18</sup>

This is perhaps more in the nature of the behaviour we would expect to find from Daguenet, whose 'folies' entertain the court. The piercing of the queen's robe by the lance, potent symbol of knightly and therefore male power has erotic connotations which cannot be missed and which only exacerbate the comedy of the

<sup>16</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §8, p. 446.

<sup>17</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §8, p. 446.

<sup>18</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §8, p. 446.



knight's impertinent clumsiness. For Guinevere, this certainly seems to confirm the conclusion that the knight before her is inferior even to Daguenet:

Et ele l'esgarde et puis si dist a mon signor Yvain basset: 'Cis chevaliers ne samble mie estre sages; non voir, de sens ne li vint il mie qu'il s'en laissa ensi amener a Daguenet, car a poi de desfense s'en peust estre desfendus, n'encore n'a il a nous parlé.'<sup>19</sup>

Whilst she stops short of actually calling Lancelot 'fol', it is clear that this is what she thinks. For her, that this knight is lacking in 'sens' can be the only explanation for letting himself be taken prisoner by a knight against whom little or no resistance would normally be necessary.<sup>20</sup>

In one last attempt to discover who this knight is, Yvain again tries to engage Lancelot in conversation, but to little avail. Whilst in contrast to his earlier silence Lancelot responds to the questions put to him by Yvain, his answers are not very informative:

'Je li voeil demander qui il est,' fait mesire Yvain. 'Sire chevaliers, qui estes vous?' fait il. Chil se regarde et voit qu'il est en la sale. 'Sire,' fait il, 'je sui uns chevaliers, che veés.' 'Et que quesistes vous chi?' 'Sire,' fait il, 'je ne sai.' 'Vous estes prisons,' fait mesire Yvains au chevalier, 'et je vous ai ostagié.' 'Jel quit bien,' fait il. 'Sire chevaliers, dirés me vous plus?' fait mesire Yvains. 'Sire, je ne vous sai que dire.'<sup>21</sup>

Yvain decides to let Lancelot go, but first seeks the queen's guarantee against any possible recriminations from Daguenet:

'Dame,' fait mesire Yvains a la roine, 'je l'ai ostagié. Se vous m'en estiés garans vers Daguenet, je l'en laroie aler.' 'Voire?' fait ele, et s'en rit. 'Vers lui', fait ele, 'vous serai je moult bien garans.' 'Et je l'en lairai dont aler,' fait il.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §9, p. 446.

<sup>20</sup> As Huot puts it (*Madness*, p. 50), to those around him:

Seemingly, then, Lancelot has shown himself to be a madman devoid of desire or direction and lacking all sense of self, even less capable of conversation or normal social behaviour than his happy-go-lucky captor.

<sup>21</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §9, pp. 446-47.

<sup>22</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §9, p. 447.

The queen's laughter again reminds us of the ridiculous nature of the situation, in which Lancelot has been unable to defend himself against Daguenet, a knight whose principal role at court seems to be that of object of amusement. Returning to Lancelot the lance that he dropped, Yvain once again leads him to the ford in the river, and Lancelot departs into the forest.

And so by the time Lancelot departs, we have certainly got a better idea of the character of the knight who managed to capture him. According to the testimony of the narrator and of the queen and Yvain, the sobriquet with which Daguenet was first introduced to us – *le Fol* – accurately reflects his character. As a 'fol' and 'coarde', nothing he says or does is taken seriously. His tales of knightly derring-do are ridiculed, and, as the queen illustrates in the last exchange with Yvain, the very idea that he should be a threat to anyone provokes nothing but laughter.

Naturally this description invites questions as to why and how such a character could become a knight at Arthur's court, and how this reflects on the wider state of Arthurian knighthood. How many other of Arthur's knights are 'fol'? Is it normal practice for such a character to receive the honour of knighthood, or was it bestowed upon Daguenet in jest? Whilst these questions are interesting, the answers are not to be found within this short appearance.<sup>23</sup>

So, what is the reason for the sudden introduction of this new character? What is Daguenet's role? We return to the questions which we posed at the very beginning – how and why has Lancelot been captured by this strange little character who, under normal circumstances, would pose no threat whatsoever? Is there any truth in the queen's conclusion that Lancelot therefore also be *fou*? How does his encounter with Daguenet impact on the romance as a whole?

Having established that Lancelot's submission to Daguenet was not due to the obvious superiority in any sense of the latter, we must conclude that the reason behind this strange encounter has something to do with Lancelot himself. To understand Lancelot's behaviour, we must look at the context for this episode, and for that we must start with the first time Lancelot ever saw Queen Guinevere. Having completed his education, the Lady of the Lake finally brought the young Lancelot to Camelot, where he was introduced to the king and the queen by Yvain. Stunned by Guinevere's beauty, he seemed to fall into some kind of trance:

Lors le prent la roine par le main, si li demande dont il est. Et quant il le senti, si tressaut tout autresi com s'il s'esveillast, et tant pense il a li durement qu'il ne seit qu'ele li a dit. Et ele aperchoit qu'il est moult esbahis, si li demande autre fois: 'Dites moi,' fait ele, 'dont vous estes'. Et il le regarde moult simplement, si li dist en sospirant qu'il ne seit dont; et ele li redemande comment il a a non et il respont que il ne seit comment.<sup>24</sup>

As Kennedy notes, this is the first of several trances induced by the sight of the woman he loves:

Once Lancelot sees Guenevere for the first time, he is so overwhelmed by her beauty that he falls into the first of a series of love trances which occur at frequent intervals throughout the text and which serve to remind us that his every action from this moment onwards is dominated by his love for Guenevere.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> As we shall see, in the prose *Tristan*, we will be told that Daguenet was indeed made knight for fun - 'par envoiseüre' – see Chapter Three, note 16.

<sup>24</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XXIIa, §23, p. 274.

<sup>25</sup> Kennedy, *Lancelot and the Grail*, p. 50. Other such trances occur not just at the sight, but even just the thought of his love, and Kennedy notes that, on each occasion, Lancelot's 'unawareness of his surroundings either lays him open to criticism for neglecting his social obligations, or places him needlessly in danger' (Elspeth Kennedy, 'Royal Broodings and Lovers' Trances in the First Part of the Prose *Lancelot*', in *Marche Romane: Mélanges de Philologie et de Littératures romanes offerts à Jeanne Wathelet-Willem*, ed. by Jacques Caluwé (Liège: Cahiers de l'ARULg, 1978), pp. 301-14, (p. 303)). For example, Lancelot is asked to let the queen and the king into a castle which he has just conquered, the Dolourous Guard. Lancelot opens the gate, but is so overcome at the sight of the queen, that he lets it shut again before she can enter (*Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XXVIIIa, §8, p. 352):

Lancelot's love for Guinevere is one of the important themes of the romance, and the love trances are a way in which this theme is reprised and recalled, particularly in the long period before the lovers acknowledge their love and consummate their relationship.

One such trance takes place the day before Lancelot meets Daguenet. Passing by Camelot in his search for adventure, Lancelot glimpses Guinevere standing at a window. The sight of her beauty causes him to fall into a reverie:

Et li chevaliers commenche la dame a regarder si que tous s'en oblie.<sup>26</sup>

This moment of distraction is interrupted by a passing knight, who, apparently offended by the impudent nature of Lancelot's gaze, interrogates Lancelot and then challenges him to follow him, and pass right in front of the queen:

'Savés vous qui est la dame que vous esgardés?' 'Je quit bien savoir,' fait il, 'qui ele est.'  
'Et qui est ele?' fait cil. 'C'est ma dame la roine.' 'M'ait Diex,' fait li autres, 'estraignement la connoissiés vous bien. Deable d'enfer vous font dame regarder!' 'Por coi?' fait li autres.  
'Por che,' fait il, 'que vous ne m'oseriés pas suirre par devant la roine la ou je iroie.'  
'Chertes,' fait li boins chevaliers, 'se vous alés en lieu ou je ne vous ose sievir, passé avrés tous les oseors qui onques fuissent.' 'Or i parra,' fait cil.<sup>27</sup>

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Chil oevre la porte et li chevaliers entre ens, mais il est tant esbahis de la roine qu'il s'en oblie tous, ne a riens n'entent fors a li veoir: si est montés en haut desus la porte et de la l'esgarde. Et la porte fu reclose.

This prompts Kay to reprimand Lancelot for his disrespect towards the queen. On another occasion, as he is entering into battle, Lancelot halts in front of a building from which the queen is watching the battle, thus placing himself directly in danger from the rapidly approaching enemy (*Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.8, XLIXa, §13, p. 10):

Desus le gué avoit unes loges ou li rois Artus estoit por l'ost esgarder et la roine et dames et damoiseles tot plain, et mesire Gauvain s'i a fait porter, si malades com il estoit. Li chevaliers a l'escu vermail s'areste sor le gué et s'apoie sor la lance.

Kennedy counts at least six love trances in which Lancelot becomes distracted to a greater or lesser extent from the task at hand. See Kennedy, 'Royal broodings and lovers' trances' and her chapter on the love theme in the prose *Lancelot* in *Lancelot and the Grail* (pp. 49-78, esp. pp. 49-59).

<sup>26</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIa, §1, p. 438.

<sup>27</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIa, §1, p. 438-39.

Lancelot agrees, stays with this unnamed knight overnight, and the next day Lancelot and his host set out. But at the sight of Camelot, Lancelot again falls into deep thought, lost in memories of his early days at court, when he first met the queen:

Lors esgarde le siege de la vile et la tor et les moustiers tant que il se menbre que che est  
Camaalot ou il fu chevaliers noviax; et il commenche a penser moult durement, si en  
chevaue plus souef.<sup>28</sup>

Consequently, Lancelot lags behind the knight who challenged him, and who he is supposed to be following. This prompts the host knight to question what has caused the delay, and whether he had been correct in his assertion that Lancelot would not have the courage to follow him all the way:

Et ses osten va avant grant aleure por savoir s'il demorrait arriere de couardise ou pour  
pensee.<sup>29</sup>

The host knight remains ahead of Lancelot, and reaches the queen first. She asks him why he is there, declares to her that he is looking at her on behalf of the most *fou* knight he has ever seen:

'Je vous esgart volentiers por le plus fol chevalier que je onques veisse.' 'Qui est il, sire  
chevaliers?' fait la roine. 'Estes vous che?' 'Nenil, dame, fait il, mais .l. autre.'<sup>30</sup>

Although he does not explain this comment, it is clear to the reader that it is Lancelot to whom he is referring. It seems that Lancelot's strange behaviour, both the previous day and en route to Camelot, have caused the host knight to conclude that not only is Lancelot probably a coward, but also *fou*.

Only once the host knight has already departed does Lancelot finally reach the queen, where, once again, the sight of her causes him to lose concentration, as he falls into another love trance:

<sup>28</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §1, p. 441-42. He is recalling his first time in Camelot, which was also when he met Guinevere for the first time (*Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XXIIa, §§19-23, pp. 273-75).

<sup>29</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §1, p. 442.

Li chevaliers fiert le cheval des esperons, si va si com ele li dist, mais il laisse le cheval aler  
la ou il veut, car il ne fait se la roine regarder non.<sup>31</sup>

Such is his distraction that he fails to stop his horse from taking him into deep water, where both are nearly drowned:

Quant li chevax vint la, si ne pot pas par iluec hors issir, si retorna ariere et commencha a  
noer tant que tous ert lassés. Et l'iaue est si parfonde que li chevax commence a perdre  
l'alaine, si vient l'iauwe jusq'as espaulles au chevalier ne il ne met nul conroi en issir hors  
et il laist le cheval aler la ou il veut.<sup>32</sup>

This time, it is not just an anonymous knight who witnesses this strange behaviour, but the queen herself, the object of Lancelot's distraction. This naturally compounds the potential humiliation for the knight, and heightens the comic tone which such a ridiculous sight sets for the episode to come. She calls for help from Yvain, who manages to rescue Lancelot and his horse from the river:

Comme mesure Yvains le voit en tel peril, si en a moult grant pitié. Lors s'en va contreval et  
cort jusqu'a l'iaue, si entre ens, che dist li contes, jusques au col et ja estoit li chevax si las  
et si estordis que il ne se pooit aidier et l'iaue estoit ja raclose au chevalier desus le hiaume  
une fois. Mesire Yvains prent le cheval par le fraim, si le maine a rive, et le trait hors de  
l'iaue et li chevaliers fu tous moilliés et cors et armes.<sup>33</sup>

Yvain enquires of the dripping knight his identity, which Lancelot will not reveal:

Mesire Yvains li demande: 'Biax sire, qui estes vous et comment entrastes vous en ceste  
iaue?' 'Sire, je sui uns chevaliers qui abevroie mon cheval.' 'Malement,' fait mesure Yvains,  
'l'abevriés vous, car par .l. poi que vous n'estiés noiés. Et ou alés vous?' 'Sire,' fait il, 'je  
sievoie .l. chevalier.'<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §2, p. 442.

<sup>31</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §4, p. 443.

<sup>32</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §4, p. 444.

<sup>33</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §5, p. 444.

<sup>34</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §6, pp. 444-45. Huot points out (*Madness*, p. 51) how Lancelot's description of himself as letting his horse drink is reminiscent of a particular fabliau known as *La Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre* or *La Pucele qui abreva le poulain*:

In this tale, a girl who could not tolerate any reference to sex is quite happy to have sexual intercourse as long as euphemistic terms are used: having assigned safely non-sexual names to their respective genitals, the girl then invites the man's 'horse' to drink at her 'fountain'. Lancelot's statement, though literally true in the sense that his horse had indeed

Suspicious, Yvain leads Lancelot across the ford and sends him on his way. Unfortunately, in the process, Lancelot again catches sight of the queen, and again loses control of his horse:

Et il[Yvain] le maine au gué et passe outre et lors commenche a regarder a la roine et ses  
chevax l'enporte tout contreval la riviere.<sup>35</sup>

And it is at this point that Lancelot meets Daguenet.

Now perhaps we can begin to answer some of our questions. When Lancelot meets Daguenet, he is under the influence of a love trance, induced by the sight of Guinevere. We have seen how such trances have recently affected him, paralysing him to the extent that he very nearly drowned himself and his horse. In this context, it is possible to see that a similar trance could distract him enough to leave him defenceless against anyone who wished to take advantage of him, and take him prisoner.

But what is particularly significant is the identity of that person. Lancelot is not captured by any ordinary knight who just happened to be passing, but a knight who embodies the antithesis of great knighthood, against whom Lancelot 'a poi de desfense s'en peust estre desfendus'.<sup>36</sup> The humiliation of allowing himself to be captured so easily is compounded both by the ridiculous nature of his captor, and the fact that the incident takes place in full view of the queen and her court. There is also a striking irony between the knightly reputation that Lancelot has set out to earn, and

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approached the river in order to drink from it, is also a veiled allusion to the sexual fantasy that preoccupies him continuously to the point of distraction.

His comment thus compounds the already comic nature of the strange situation in which Lancelot finds himself, a comedy which will be underlined by the unlikely capture by Daguenet.

<sup>35</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §6, p. 445.

<sup>36</sup> See note 19.

which until now he seemed to have been achieving, and the impression which he now gives as being worse even than Daguenet, 'la plus coarde pieche de car'.<sup>37</sup>

Indeed there can be no denying the inherent comedy of the whole situation. Whilst, as we have seen, Lancelot succeeds in making himself a ridiculous figure when he initially allows himself to be dragged into the river by his horse, the subsequent intervention of the *fou de cour* only adds to the effect, particularly evident in the hilarity which greets Daguenet's claim to have taken Lancelot prisoner.<sup>38</sup> But this is more than a mere 'comic interlude'.<sup>39</sup> Daguenet's role is far more important than merely as a means for Lancelot's humiliation. Lancelot has been taken prisoner by a knight who seems to reflect the current ambiguous state of Lancelot's own mind. The description of Daguenet, in which *folie* and cowardice are noted as the salient features of his personality, is clearly designed to draw our attention back to the same doubts which had been raised earlier in relation to Lancelot. The knight who had interrupted the first love trance suggested that Lancelot was a victim of precisely the weaknesses from which Daguenet suffers. He questioned whether cowardice was preventing Lancelot from keeping up on the journey to see the queen, and then declared to the queen that he was looking at her on behalf of the 'le plus fol chevalier que je onques veisse'.<sup>40</sup>

In fact, in many ways, Daguenet seems to be a physical manifestation of the effects of the love trance on Lancelot. He embodies the *folie* and cowardice of which Lancelot has been accused, and his physical control over Lancelot can be seen as a projection of the way the love trance controls Lancelot's mind, to the extent that

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<sup>37</sup> See note 13.

<sup>38</sup> See note 11.

<sup>39</sup> See note 12.

<sup>40</sup> See note 30.



Daguenet even speaks on behalf of the silent Lancelot. Daguenet's appearance coincides almost precisely with the onset of Lancelot's distraction on the riverbank, and once the paralysing power of the love trance begins to wane inasmuch as Lancelot finally responds to Yvain's questions, Daguenet disappears.

In this same role, Daguenet also completes a journey begun by the first love trance. These trances, as well as demonstrating the strength of Lancelot's love, also draw him closer to the object of that love, Guinevere. The first distraction resulted in the challenge for Lancelot to follow his host in front of the queen. That journey brings him to within the sight of the queen herself, and a second love trance attracts her attention directly to him, when he is nearly drowned in the river. However, once Yvain has rescued Lancelot, the distracted knight is directed away from the court and the object of his love.

It is only when the third trance overtakes him, and Daguenet takes him into his own custody, that the lovelorn knight is finally brought face to face with the lady he loves. Daguenet, by capturing Lancelot, finishes the work begun by the previous trances by not only bringing him physically to court, but also, by the very fact of his reputation, draws the attention of everyone present to his prisoner, and the strange behaviour of that knight.

Thus Daguenet is a mirror, an index for the love which causes Lancelot to act in this way. Daguenet draws the attention of both the reader and the court to the theme which is central to the romance:

Le fol d'Arthur apparaît pour montrer du doigt le fol par excellence, le fol par amour.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Fritz, *Le Discours du fou*, p. 268. This idea is elaborated in his article ('Daguenet ou le bouffon amoureux', p. 46):

La vérité du personnage de Daguenet n'est plus dans le 'gab' ou le rire, mais dans sa valeur d'indice: Daguenet, le 'fols naïs', montre le fol par amour à la cour d'Arthur (il amène Lancelot à Guenièvre et à Yvain) et au lecteur.

For the reader, who is aware of the wider picture, particularly the direct context for this episode, and most importantly the identity of the captive knight, this scene is an interesting, if brief, exposition of the theme of love. Lancelot has shown himself to be, at this moment in time, a *fou* of the order of Arthur's *fol*, Daguenet. However, as the audience knows, his *folie* is not inherent in his nature, as with Daguenet, 'fols naïs', but is a temporary state induced by his overwhelming love for the queen.<sup>42</sup> For the queen and her companions, however, who do not know Lancelot's name, it can surely be little more than an interesting diversion, in which Daguenet entertains them at the expense of an anonymous knight who is clearly of little chivalric worth or ability. For both, such a brief digression could easily be forgotten amongst the wealth of other adventures which take place.

However, Daguenet's involvement with Lancelot does not cease completely when the latter is released. Kennedy notes that Lancelot:

justifies his meditations and vindicates himself from accusations of *folie* or *recreantise* by his subsequent actions under the inspiration of the very love which had plunged him into deep thought.<sup>43</sup>

This occasion is no exception. When released by Yvain, Lancelot rides off into the forest, where he seems regain his senses. First, he meets up with the knight whose challenge had led him this far, the pair fight, and the challenger surrenders. This knight then leads Lancelot to two giants who had been terrorising the local area:

.II. gaians qui ont une partie de cest pais deserte, ne pres de chi ou il conversent n'ose nus passer qui aimt le roi Artu ne la roine ne chels de sa maison.<sup>44</sup>

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Huot agrees (*Madness*, p. 51):

This early encounter with Daguenet does highlight the problematic, ambivalent nature of Lancelot's love, sign at once of his greatness and of his fatal imperfection.

<sup>42</sup>As Huot notes (*Madness*, p. 51):

Lancelot's affliction, as the reader knows very well, is not the intrinsic folly of Daguenet, but rather his immersion in a higher contemplation, that of his love for the queen.

<sup>43</sup> Kennedy, 'Royal Broodings and Lovers' Trances', p. 307.

All of this is witnessed by Yvain, who had followed Lancelot from the riverbank. To Yvain's amazement, in a brief and bloody combat, Lancelot easily kills both giants. Returning to Camelot, Yvain recounts what he has seen to Gauvain and the queen:

Il comenche a dire, oiant la roine et mon signor Gauvain et oiant tous les autres, quanques il avoit veu del chevalier et conte comment il se combati au chevalier et comment et l'eust outré d'armes, s'il volsist, et comment il avoit .i. des gaians mort et comment il colpa a l'autre le pié et le puing.<sup>45</sup>

Hearing this, Daguenet leaps forward to claim a piece of the glory:

'Ch'est li chevaliers que je pris, ch'est li chevaliers que je pris qui tout che a fait!'<sup>46</sup>

This rather comic little outburst is greeted by Yvain with a dismissive acknowledgement, which in turn incites Daguenet to seek support from Gauvain:

'Voire voir,' fait mesire Yvain, 'c'est mon.' 'En non Dieu, itex chevaliers sai je prendre! Moult sui ore mauvais! En non Dieu,' fait il, 'mesire Gauvain, se vous l'eussiés prins, si en fuissiés vous tous cointes.'<sup>47</sup>

But his pleas for recognition fall on deaf ears, as Yvain ignores Daguenet's cries and continues in conversation with Gauvain.

Yvain describes to Gauvain how, having witnessed the slaying of the giants, a passing damsel had made a strange comment to him:

'Encore vous en dirai je plus: comme li chevaliers ot les jaians conquis, si vint une puchele par devant moi qui dist: "Sire chevaliers, ch'est la tierche"'<sup>48</sup>

This provokes an odd reaction from Gauvain, whose smile causes the queen to take him to one side and question him:

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<sup>44</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §13, pp. 448-49.

<sup>45</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §17, p. 451.

<sup>46</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §17, p. 451.

<sup>47</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §17, p. 451.

<sup>48</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §17, p. 451.

Et mesire Gauvain l'ot, si enbronche la teste et sosrist, et la roine s'en prist garde: si prinst mon signor Gauvain par le main et s'en vont seoir a une fenestre et ele li dist: 'Par la foi que vous devés le roi et moi, dites moi por coi vous resistes orains?'<sup>49</sup>

Gauvain explains to her the significance of the damsel's comment. He describes how the damsel's comment enables him to identify the unknown knight as Lancelot:

Che dist mesire Gauvain: 'Menbre vous,' fait il, 'que la puchele vous dist en la Dolerouse Garde, cele qui estoit en la tornele en prison? Ja l'oïstes vous autresi bien comme je fis.' 'Il ne m'en menbre,' fait la roine. 'Ele vous dist,' fait mesire Gauvain, 'que nous oriemes noveles del chevalier qui nous fist entrer en la Dolerouse Garde a la premiere assamblee qui seroit el roialme de Logres et a le seconde et a la tierche, et c'est la tierce. Et li chevaliers qui les gaians a mors si est Lancelos del Lac et de voir le sachies.'<sup>50</sup>

One of Lancelot's first major successes as a knight had been to conquer an enchanted castle, the Dolorous Guard,<sup>51</sup> a success which prompts Gauvain to embark upon a quest to discover the true identity of the conqueror, who is known at that point only as the White Knight. Before he sets out, a damsel predicts that Gauvain will have news of this White Knight at the first, second and third assemblies.<sup>52</sup> Finally, after the second assembly, he learns that the White Knight whom he seeks is called 'Lancelot del lac'.<sup>53</sup> The comment of the damsel, 'c'est la tierche', refers to the fact

<sup>49</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §17, p. 451.

<sup>50</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §18, pp. 451-52.

<sup>51</sup> The significance of this castle and Lancelot's victory is discussed in Daniel Poirion's article 'La Douloureuse Garde', in *Approches du 'Lancelot en prose'*, ed. by Jean Dufournet (Paris: Champion, 1984), pp. 25-48.

<sup>52</sup> See note 3.

<sup>53</sup> After the second Assembly, a damsel who has accompanied Gauvain on his quest to find the White Knight reveals that she knows his name (*Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLIIa, §11, p. 426):

Bien sachiés que ch'est Lancelos del Lac, li fiex au roi Ban de Benoÿc, chil qui a hui vencu ceste assamblee, et l'autre venqui il autresi as vermeilles armes et fist le roi entrer en la Dolerouse Garde.

Pleased to have finally fulfilled his quest, Gauvain takes this news back to court. However, Lancelot continues to fight unrecognised under different sets of armour.

that the Third Assembly is about to begin, and Gauvain takes this as a signal that the knight whom they have just seen killing the giants and the knight whom Daguenet took prisoner is the same knight that he has been searching for: Lancelot of the Lake.

But in the midst of other people's conversations, Daguenet will not allow himself to be ignored, and continues to protest at the top of his voice:

Mais Daguenés fait tel noise que rien ne puet a lui durer et dist a chascun que il avoit prins  
le boin chevalier qui les gaians ochist.<sup>54</sup>

He even takes his claim to the highest authority, King Arthur, but is rewarded only with laughter:

Et Daguenés vient a lui, si li dist: 'Sire, par la foi que vous doi, je prins cel boin chevalier', et  
li rois en rist moult et tout li autre.<sup>55</sup>

And so we can see that, although Lancelot redeems himself by killing the giants, even the news of this feat does not completely eclipse the earlier humiliation. Daguenet pops up again, reminding the reader and the court of his earlier involvement with the knight who has subsequently earned their respect and admiration. Daguenet's presence draws attention to the stark contrast between Lancelot's behaviour under the influence of the love trance and his true knightly potential, as demonstrated in his victory over the giants. Having had his ability thrown into question, Lancelot has now proved this doubting to be unfounded, and his success against the giants is made all the more impressive for its comparison with this earlier embarrassment.<sup>56</sup> Conversely, far from eclipsing the humiliation of his

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<sup>54</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §18, p. 452.

<sup>55</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §18, p. 452.

<sup>56</sup> Kennedy ('Royal Broodings and Lovers' Trances', p. 307) notes that this cycle of doubting then testing of the knight forms a pattern. Each of Lancelot's love trances (or 'meditations') are followed by exploits which disprove the doubts that are provoked:

encounter with Daguenet, the giant-killing episode serves to underline the power of a love trance which can reduce such a brilliant knight to below the level of the *fou de cour*.

For Daguenet himself, this last appearance also reiterates and confirms his place at court. His frantic quest for recognition for the capture of Lancelot is comic both for its childish enthusiasm and lack of dignity, and yet also poignant, because, for once, his claim is true. Lancelot, who has now proved himself so capable, was recently in Daguenet's custody, so surely some of the glory should reflect on him? Unfortunately, Yvain's cursory acknowledgement only confirms Daguenet's place at the bottom of the chivalric pecking order, and the laughter of the whole court eventually dismisses him completely.

But this very brief appearance is also significant for the revelation that it frames. Thanks to the words of the damsel as reported by Yvain, Gauvain is able to identify the unknown knight as Lancelot of the Lake, the same knight who had excelled at the Assemblies and who has inspired the curiosity of Arthur and his knights. This revelation, an important step in the development of Lancelot's story, is closely linked to Daguenet, not only by the earlier scene by the river, but now also by the frantic claims for recognition which Daguenet is making at the same time in the background. Whilst at this point, Daguenet is a mere nuisance interruption in the conversation of Gauvain and the queen, as we shall soon see, the link between Daguenet and Lancelot's identity later plays an instrumental role in a pivotal encounter between Guinevere and Lancelot.

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[Lancelot] justifies his meditations and vindicates himself from accusations of *folie* or *recreantise* by his subsequent actions under the inspiration of the very love which had plunged him into deep thought.

Although, as we have seen, Daguenet's appearance in the text itself is very brief, the narrator extends the influence of his involvement with Lancelot through the way in which he identifies Lancelot to the audience. Lancelot still has to earn his name, and the narrator reflects this by not using this name to refer to him, but instead using a variety of descriptors, often reflecting his most recent exploits.<sup>57</sup> For example, when Lancelot sets off with the knight who has challenged him to pass in front of the queen, shortly before he meets Daguenet on the riverbank, Lancelot is referred to as the victor of the recent Assembly:

Quant li chevaliers qui l'assamblee ot vencie ot jeu chiés le chevalier qui l'osta de son  
penser, si leva moult matin et sieut son oste la ou il le volt mener.<sup>58</sup>

The way in which the narrator describes Lancelot here is clearly designed as a positive reminder to the reader of his growing reputation and prowess, encouraging us to expect more of the same. Right up until Daguenet takes him prisoner, the narrator is reminding us of Lancelot's ability, reflecting his success in his quest to earn his name and reputation as a knight.

However, his capture by Daguenet calls this prowess into question, and when Lancelot leaves the scene at the river, he is no longer 'li chevaliers qui l'assemblee ot vaincue', but 'li chevaliers que Daguenés ot prins'<sup>59</sup>. Between that point and his capture by the Lady of Malohaut a short while later,<sup>60</sup> he is variously labelled: 'li chevaliers que Daguenés avoit prist'<sup>61</sup>; 'li chevaliers Daguenet'<sup>62</sup>; 'chil que Daguenés

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<sup>57</sup> Kennedy (*Lancelot and the Grail*, p. 26) notes that, until he admits his own name, 'the young hero is designated by a series of titles used with some subtlety, not only to emphasize the continuing mystery of his identity for Arthur's court, and to draw attention to his succession of achievements under various disguises, but also to strengthen the interlacing technique.'

<sup>58</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §1, p. 441.

<sup>59</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §12, p. 448.

<sup>60</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIIa, §8, p. 457.

<sup>61</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §12, p. 448.

prist'<sup>63</sup>; and again 'li chevaliers que Daguenetz prist'<sup>64</sup>. This repeated reminder of his humiliation continues even after he has been witnessed by Yvain slaying the giants.

Whilst the narrator briefly credits Lancelot with this success in order to return the tale to him – calling him the 'chevalier qui les gians ochist'<sup>65</sup> – he soon refers to him again in terms of Daguenet: 'et quant li chevaliers aproce, chil que Daguenés prist, et li autres se traist avant, si li demande qui il est.'<sup>66</sup> Even once he has proved his worth through the defeat of the giants, the narrator's continued use of the reference back to his capture by Daguenet serves to emphasise to the reader the dissonance between his current performance and his earlier failure, and the palpable absurdity of that episode in the light of Lancelot's true knightly ability. Only once Lancelot finds himself taken prisoner by another, the Lady of Malohaut, does the narrator cease referring to him in terms of Daguenet.<sup>67</sup>

Even then, however, Daguenet is not entirely forgotten. In many ways, his most important role is still to come. We have already seen how Daguenet brought Lancelot in his trance to the attention of the Queen and her retinue. Throughout this scene Lancelot had remained unrecognised by anyone present, and thus, for those within the narrative, the episode appeared to be little more than an amusing distraction. Only when Gauvain is able to connect the comment made by the damsel to Yvain with what he already knows can he finally reveal to the queen that the knight who has undergone such humiliation at the hands of Daguenet is in fact the

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<sup>62</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §12, p. 448.

<sup>63</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIIa, §2, p. 453.

<sup>64</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIIa, §3, p. 454.

<sup>65</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §18, p. 452.

<sup>66</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIIa, §2, p. 453.



same knight who has been excelling himself at the tournaments, and that his name is Lancelot. By this time, however, Lancelot had already departed into the forest, and once again eluded those who seek him.

Following the episode with Daguenet, Lancelot undertakes great adventures in the guises of the Red Knight at the Third Assembly, which is the first battle against Arthur's enemy, Galehout, and as the Black Knight at the Fourth Assembly, which leads to Galehout's surrender.<sup>68</sup> Galehout strikes up a good relationship with Lancelot, who still does not reveal his own name, over the course of the negotiations for peace, and Galehout learns of the love of the unknown knight for the queen.<sup>69</sup>

Taking pity on the unhappy lover, Galehout persuades him to meet Guinevere in private. Galehout, still unaware of Lancelot's name, then introduces him to the queen as 'li millor chevalier del monde'.<sup>70</sup> Left alone with this great knight, Guinevere tries to elicit his identity from him through a series of questions about his exploits, the answers to which build up a list of Lancelot's adventures to date. Although this information leads her to believe this is indeed Lancelot, the knight who has been building himself an excellent reputation yet remaining so elusive, it is through her recollection of one particular episode that she is finally able to identify him. Guinevere enquires of the unknown knight if they have met before, and Lancelot recalls how, if it were not for her intervention, he would have drowned in the river:

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<sup>67</sup> The last reference to Lancelot as 'li chevaliers que Daguenés prist' is *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIIa, §3, p. 454. Lancelot is taken prisoner by the Lady of Malohaut three pages later (*Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIIa, §8, p. 457).

<sup>68</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.8, LIIa, §70, p. 85.

<sup>69</sup> Galehout only learns Lancelot's name when it is revealed to him by Guinevere immediately after the secret meeting we are about to look at (*Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.8, LIIa, §116, p. 116).

<sup>70</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.8, LIIa, §100, p. 104

'J'eusse esté ochis, se vous ne fuissiés, qui me feistes fors de l'aigue traire a mon seignor  
Yvain.'<sup>71</sup>

Immediately she is able to connect this near-drowning to the subsequent capture by Daguenet:

'Comment?' fait ele. 'Fustes vous chou cui Daguenés le Coars prist?' ' Dame, je ne sai qui  
ce fu, mais prins fui je sans faille.'<sup>72</sup>

When he adds that he had then killed two giants, Guinevere declares:

'Ha,' fait ele, 'dont sai je bien qui vous estes: vous avés non Lancelos del Lac.'<sup>73</sup>

For Guinevere, Lancelot's encounter with Daguenet is the key for her identification of her future lover. The bizarre circumstances in which the *fou* had captured Lancelot, and brought him so directly to the queen herself clearly left a lasting impression on her. Without that encounter, Yvain would not have followed Lancelot, would not have witnessed the subsequent defeat of the giants which contrasted so starkly with Lancelot's behaviour in the presence of the queen, and Yvain would not have reported back to Gauvain the words of the damsel which identified the knight as Lancelot.

It is not just his name, but the reason for his behaviour which the memory of Daguenet reveals to the queen. The mystery of Daguenet's improbable victory seems still to trouble her, and she asks Lancelot how he could have let it occur:

Lors li demande por coi il avoit souffert que li pires hom del mont l'avoit mené par le fraim.

'Dame, comme chil qui n'avoie point ne mon cuer ne de mon cors.'<sup>74</sup>

His answer indicates to the queen what the reader is already knows: that Lancelot's lack of control over his own actions was a direct result of his lack of control over his heart. This admission leads the queen to enquire as to the identity of the lady to

<sup>71</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.8, LIIa, §106, p. 108.

<sup>72</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.8, LIIa, §106, p. 108.

<sup>73</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.8, LIIa, §106, p. 109.

whom he had given his heart, and for whom he has performed all these feats, and Lancelot does not hesitate to confess that it is she who has been his inspiration:

'Et je sai bien que por aucune dame avés vous che fait, et dites moi qui ele est, par la foi que vous me devés.' 'Ha, dame,' fait il, 'bien voi que il le me covient a dire. Dame, che estes vous.'<sup>75</sup>

For Lancelot, the episode in which this exchange takes place between the queen and himself is pivotal.<sup>76</sup> It brings together two themes central to the romance: love and identity. Until this point, Lancelot has won praise and acclaim for his deeds, but each time it was under a different guise. Guinevere, through her questions, establishes that the credit belongs to just one knight, and that his name is Lancelot of the Lake. Similarly, her questions also establish that all these deeds were performed for the sake of one cause, Lancelot's love for the queen, a love which is soon to be reciprocated as the pair seal it with their first kiss,<sup>77</sup> the first step towards the consummation of one of the most famous relationships in medieval romance. It is in the unfolding of this story, the facilitation of these admissions which bring the two lovers together that Daguenet plays an instrumental role.

So the prose *Lancelot* gives us our first introduction to Daguenet. Our admittedly brief encounter with him presents a puzzling character, at a tangent to the familiar world of chivalry. He is apparently famed for the traits which make him the antithesis of great knighthood: *folie* and cowardice. He certainly has a reputation:

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<sup>74</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.8, LIIa, §107, p. 109.

<sup>75</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.8, LIIa, §107, p. 110.

<sup>76</sup> Kennedy (*Lancelot and the Grail*, p. 58) calls it:

The key episode in the structure of the romance, both in relation to the love theme and to the identity theme: the first secret meeting between Lancelot and Guinevere. It is then that the kiss is exchanged, and Guinevere by persistent questioning establishes both Lancelot's identity and the extent to which all his actions have been dominated by his love for her, Lancelot thereby admitting to both his name and his love.

however, it is not for his actual feats of chivalry, but for the entertainment and amusement that his behaviour and his outlandish claims for glory inspire. Although we are told he is a knight, we are left to wonder why such a character would receive such an honour, if not simply for its comic potential.<sup>78</sup>

But his appearance is no simple comic interlude. Daguenet's antics certainly cause amusement to the queen and her companions, but his role is serious. Juxtaposed with the hero of the romance, Lancelot, Daguenet's unlikely control over this usually great knight highlights the power in which Lancelot is held by the love trances. For the audience, armed with their knowledge of Lancelot and his story to date, Daguenet acts as an index of the knight's love for Guinevere, bringing together the two future lovers.

More importantly perhaps, Daguenet performs the same service for the queen herself, although with somewhat of a delay. His remarkable association with Lancelot and its direct consequences make an impression on Guinevere, although she does not immediately recognise its significance. It is only when the pair are again brought face to face that she is able to use the episode as a key by which to unlock both the identity of the knight before her and his love for her. These revelations lead in turn to the mutual recognition of this love and the beginning of their relationship.

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<sup>77</sup> 'Et la roine voit que li chevaliers n'en ose plus faire, si le prent par le menton et le baise devant Galahot assés longuement' (*Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.8, LIIa, §115, pp. 115-16).

<sup>78</sup> As Huot says (*Madness*, p. 45):

[...] despite Daguenet's self-image, he is not, of course, a real knight; he is only allowed to imitate knighthood for the general amusement of the court.

At this stage, this certainly seems to be a valid inference from the scanty evidence provided by the prose *Lancelot*. However, as we shall see, the question of the nature of Daguenet's knighthood will be addressed in more detail in *Guiron le Courtois*, where he will be given a far more prestigious background than suggested here.

In the midst of the long and voluminous cyclic prose *Lancelot*, a reader could be forgiven for failing to remember Daguenet amongst the many other interesting characters who frequently appear and then disappear. I hope to have shown that his appearance is far more significant than such a cursory reading would suggest, and that in Daguenet, the author has created a character whose intrinsic interest and wider narrative potential are enough to inspire subsequent authors to adopt and exploit him to their own ends.

## Chapter Three

### *Daguenet in the prose 'Tristan'*

Having acquainted ourselves with Daguenet in the *Prose Lancelot*, we first come across him in the prose *Tristan* in a rather curious little episode towards the beginning of the romance.<sup>1</sup> He pops up quite unexpectedly shortly after the Demoisele Mesdisant and the 'Chevalier a la Cote Mautaillee'<sup>2</sup> have set out from Arthur's court.

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<sup>1</sup> The composition of the prose *Tristan* is generally accepted to post-date that of the prose *Lancelot* and the rest of the Grail cycle, a conclusion based very convincingly not only on dating evidence, which places its composition at between 1215-1235 (see Appendix Two, note 1 for further detail), but also on textual evidence that the prose *Lancelot* was in fact an important source for material used in the prose *Tristan*. This is demonstrated by Baumgartner in her comprehensive study of the prose *Tristan* (Baumgartner, *Le 'Tristan en prose': essai d'interprétation*, pp. 118-32) and by Colette-Anne Van Coolput in her study (Van Coolput, *Aventures querant*) which is devoted entirely to the analysis of the reception of the Grail cycle in the prose *Tristan*.

The prose *Tristan* has an extremely complex manuscript tradition, but the various versions and branches of the romance are well summarised by Löseth in his comprehensive analysis (E. Löseth, *Le Roman en prose de 'Tristan', le roman de 'Palamède' et la composition de Rusticien de Pise: analyse critique d'après les manuscrits de Paris* (New York: Franklin, 1970; first publ. Paris: Bouillon, 1891)). I have attempted to collate the most salient points in Appendix Two. There exist two editions of the romance, *Tristan*, ed. Curtis and *Tristan* ed. Ménard. Ménard's edition picks up the romance where Curtis finishes, and completes the story. References concerning the first two episodes we will look at will be to those editions. I have produced my own semi-diplomatic edition of the third episode in which Daguenet appears for the purposes of this study, which is found in Appendix Three, and from which quotations will be taken.

<sup>2</sup> The actual name of the 'vallet' - Brunor - is not revealed until later in the romance, but for ease of nomenclature, I shall refer to him here as Brunor. For a closer discussion of the place of this episode, often referred to as 'le roman du Vallet à la Cote Mautaillee', see Appendix Two. For a brief overview of Brunor's role in the prose *Tristan*, see Janina P. Traxler, 'An Analysis of Brunor in the

The story so far is this: the Demoisele Mesdisanz<sup>3</sup> has arrived at Arthur's court to ask for a knight to accompany her on an adventure 'si grief et si perilleuse que Lanceloz dou Lac avroit assez a faire de mener ceste aventure a fin'.<sup>4</sup> No one volunteers except Brunor, 'li chevaliers a la Cote Mautaillee',<sup>5</sup> who has just been made knight by Arthur, and requests this quest as a favour in order that he can prove himself. Arthur agrees, but the Demoisele is disgusted at this offer of such an inexperienced knight. She pours scorn on a court that will offer no better, and leaves.<sup>6</sup> Brunor is determined to follow her, picks up the shield she has left and follows her. After much discussion, Brunor is finally able to convince her to let him accompany her on the quest with this bargain: if he proves himself in the first adventure they come across, he will stay with her, otherwise she can tell him to leave.<sup>7</sup> The Demoisele agrees to this and the pair set off towards the woods, towards their first adventure which will decide whether Brunor can continue with her in her quest.

Encountered at the edge of the forest, Daguenet provides the opportunity for just such an adventure. Daguenet challenges Brunor to a tourney and Brunor eagerly accepts the chance to prove his worth to the scathing Demoisele, and easily defeats

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*Prose Tristan*, *Tristania*, 12 (1986-87), 1-13. Traxler notes that Brunor appears only in the prose *Tristan* and *Guiron le Courtois*, and that he 'emerges as a significant new figure' (p. 1). Traxler sees Brunor's encounter with Daguenet as an opportunity for Brunor to demonstrate that he is 'both patient and persistent' (p. 2), qualities which she considers contribute to his distinction as 'perhaps...the most admirable knight of Version I' (p. 7) (for an explanation of the versions of the prose *Tristan*, see Appendix Two).

<sup>3</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §666, ll.1, p. 237: 'la demoisele mesdisanz' – so-called for her sharp and often malicious tongue.

<sup>4</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §648, ll.11-13, p. 224.

<sup>5</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §646, ll.16, p. 224.

<sup>6</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §648, ll.8-22, pp. 224-25.

<sup>7</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §653, ll.7-11, p. 228.

Daguenet. Any joy this may have brought him is short-lived, however, as the squires who accompany Daguenet reveal that instead of honour, fighting Daguenet brings only shame, regardless of the outcome. This only confirms the lowly opinion that the Demoisele Medisant held of Brunor, and she pours scorn and abuse on him before refusing to remain in his company. Only by a clever argument in which he convinces her that she would get more pleasure from his company than if he left - ‘car de ma desonor avroiz vos joie’<sup>8</sup> - can Brunor continue upon the quest. However, in the series of adventures which follow, he is unable to prove her wrong, and ultimately has to hand over the adventure of the ‘destrois de Sorelois’ to Lancelot.<sup>9</sup>

It all begins with an encounter at the edge of the forest:

Atant se metent [Brunor and the Demoisele] a la voie et s'en vont tot le grant chemin ferré  
 dusqu'a l'entree de la forest qui granz estoit. A celi point qu'il durent en la forest entrer, il lor  
 avint qu'il encontrerent Daganet, le fol au roi Artus, qui menoit an sa compaignie deus  
 escuiers.<sup>10</sup>

There are two points to which the author draws the reader's attention here. First is the location of the meeting. By repeating the place in which the group finds itself - ‘a l'entrée de la forest’ and ‘a celi point qu'il durent en la forest entrer’ - the author is indicating to the careful reader that this is important. In fact, the true significance lies in where the encounter is *not* taking place. Placing them on the edge of the forest means that Brunor and the Demoisele are no longer at court, but neither are they in ‘le lieu de l'errance du chevalier’<sup>11</sup> – the forest - and Brunor has not yet quite reached

<sup>8</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §656, ll.13-14, p. 230.

<sup>9</sup> This adventure involves defeating six giants who guard three bridges, a feat which had only been accomplished by one previous knight. For a brief explanation of this adventure, see Löseth, *Analyse*, §73. Lancelot is successful in his attempt to complete the adventure: see *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, iii, §775, p. 88.

<sup>10</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §654, ll.1-4, p. 229.

<sup>11</sup> Baumgartner, *La Harpe et l'épée*, p. 73. As Saunders notes, the forest is of course the ‘archetypal romance landscape’ (Corinne Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance: Avernus, Broceliande, Arden* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1993), p. ix), which holds particular significance for the knight as the



the milieu in which to fulfil his knightly ambition. Only just knighted, Brunor's desire is to prove his worth, which can only be achieved in the true world of knightly adventure - the forest.

Similarly for Daguenet, the location holds a significance. Whilst we are later told 'Daguenet estoit de la forest',<sup>12</sup> there is a distinct failure at this point to provide an explanation as to his presence at this particular location. The suggestion to the reader seems to be that he is accustomed to wandering about in this sort of No-Man's land between the court and the territory of the true knight, truly at home in neither one nor the other.<sup>13</sup>

Ambiguity also surrounds Daguenet's chivalric status. His initial introduction to us is a little confusing: 'Daguenet, le fol au roi Artus, qui menoit en sa compaignie deus escuiers.' To be accompanied by squires surely implies that Daguenet holds the

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'lieu privilégié de l'aventure' (Baumgartner, *Tristan et Iseut: de la légende aux récits en vers* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1987), p. 49). Saunders' study of the role of the forest in medieval romance assesses both the symbolic value of the motif and its relationship to the historical reality of the forest landscape. She notes that, taking their lead from Chrétien, the forest of the prose romances has a specific role as the environment in which a knight can prove his worth (Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance*):

The forest is clearly presented, as in Chrétien's romances, as a specialized locus in which adventure attends the knight, as that he may prove himself (p. 108).

The forest seems to represent a landscape tailored to the development and self-realisation of the great chivalric knight (p. 80).

<sup>12</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §655, l.1, p. 229.

<sup>13</sup> Daguenet seems to be inhabiting at this point what Roger Pensom calls a 'liminal' space: the boundary between two worlds, particularly, as in this case, between the forest and 'social space' (see Roger Pensom, *Reading Béroul's Tristan* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1985), esp. pp. 43-46. This ambiguity reflects the corresponding ambiguity of Daguenet's place within society itself, where he occupies the very fringes of knighthood. Indeed, Huot suggests that Daguenet occupies one of the two 'liminal spaces' which mark the 'boundaries of knighthood' (Huot, *Madness*, p. 49). At one extreme are situated the Siège Perilleux and Galahad, which represent the ideal of perfect knighthood to which all others must aspire. At the other is Daguenet, 'the comical marker of incompetence' (p. 49), who 'reassuringly embodies the flaws and failings that the knights of the Round Table have distanced from themselves' (p. 53).

status of a knight. Yet his description as the king's 'fol' does not support this conclusion – as we saw in the first chapter, the position of *fou de cour* would hardly merit such a prestigious status,<sup>14</sup> and there was no sign of such squires in the prose *Lancelot*.

Following Daguenet's appearance, the narrator temporarily abandons Brunor and the Demoisele to concentrate in the description of this new character. He begins by explaining that Daguenet had been brought out that morning by the squires as a joke:

Li escuier l'avoient fait le jor armer par gaberie et par envoiseüre, et li avoit l'en fait entendant qu'il troverroit des chevaliers de Cornoaille a qui il porroit joster. Cil Dagenes estoit fox, si l'avoit l'en fait chevalier par envoiseüre.<sup>15</sup>

This image of Daguenet as an object of amusement tallies with the brief impression we were given in the prose *Lancelot*, where his words and actions were often greeted with laughter. But whilst in the *Lancelot*, no explanation was given as to how this *fou* could also be a knight, we are now told that he had been given this status for fun. Thus the narrator firmly establishes in the mind of his audience that Daguenet is an object of amusement, not to be taken seriously. The emphasis on 'envoiseüre'<sup>16</sup> as

<sup>14</sup> As we saw in Chapter One, pp. 12-22.

<sup>15</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §654, ll.4-7, p. 229.

<sup>16</sup> *Envoiseüre* is used frequently in the course of the prose *Tristan*. Baumgartner (*La Harpe et l'épée*, p. 89) says of the collocation 'par jeu et par envoiseüre':

Dans cette expression, qui revient souvent dans le *Tristan*, *envoiseüre* comme l'adjectif *envoisié* qualifient une manière d'être au monde chargée de sensualité, la faculté de jouir de tous les plaisirs qu'il peut offrir: plaisir de la fête, du chant, de la danse, du spectacle de la nature et, bien entendu, plaisirs de l'amour.

Sensuality and enjoyment of good things does not, however, seem to be the sense here. Tobler-Lommatzsch gives the following definitions: *envoiseüre* - Kurzweil, Lustigkeit, Vergnügtsein, Spaß, Mutwillen; *par envoiseüre* - zur Kurzweil, aus Mutwillen. The binomial expression 'par gaberie et par envoiseüre' would suggest something a little less innocent than Baumgartner's comment implies: perhaps something more like 'mockery' or 'gibe'. See Emmanuèle Baumgartner, 'Arthur et les chevaliers *envoisiés*', *Romania*, 105 (1984), 312-25, and, by the same author, Chapter 5, 'Par jeu et par "envoiseüre"', in *La Harpe et l'épée*, pp. 89-106.

the motivation for those who are behind Daguenet's jaunts seems to encapsulate a sense of light-hearted entertainment, fun and enjoyment which lies behind the games they play with him - the 'gaberiers'. There is no hint of malicious or ill treatment of Daguenet as they exploit his hatred of knights of Cornwall for their own amusement, although there does seem to be an element of mockery. He is a willing, if ignorant, partner in their plans, from which he himself gets much pleasure:

Et il haoit le chevaliers de Cornoaille mout durement, et quant aucuns en venoit par aventure el reaume de Logres et il trovoit Dagenet, l'en li faisoit entendant que c'estoit aucuns preudons, si que cil ne l'osoit atendre, et Daguenez l'en chaçoit por ce que l'en li disoit que c'estoit uns des chevaliers cortois de Cornoaille. En tel maniere en fesoient lor gaberie cil qui le conoissoient, ne nus chevaliers qui le coneüst ne jostast a li, car il i eüst plus de honte que d'onor; et por ceste achoison que je vos ai dite vouloit Daguenez joster a toz les chevaliers que l'en li disoit qui estoient de Cornoaille.<sup>17</sup>

The author makes a great deal of Daguenet's very precise choice of enemy in the knights of Cornwall. Indeed, this exaggerated antipathy towards the knights from Cornwall is of particular interest. The exact reason for this antipathy, as with so many aspects of Daguenet, is not made explicit. It lies perhaps in the rivalry that naturally exists between knights of different allegiances, duty bound to prove their worth by entering into combat with each other. Cornish knights also seem to be held in particularly low esteem by those at Arthur's court, apparently noted for their lack of courage.<sup>18</sup> For the inhabitants of Logres, the knights of Cornwall are a source of

<sup>17</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §654, ll.7-15, p. 229.

<sup>18</sup> The seeds of this extremely negative portrayal of the knights of Cornwall can even be found in Bérout's *Tristan*, where, for example, the narrator describes Mark's barons (Bérout, *Le Roman de Tristan*, in *Tristan et Iseut: les poèmes français, la saga norroise*, ed. by Daniel Lacroix and Philippe Walter, (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1989), pp. 21-231, (ll.581-82, p. 48)):

A la cort avoit trois barons  
Ainz ne veïstes plus felons.

In the prose *Tristan*, Baumgartner (*Le 'Tristan en prose': essai d'interprétation*, p. 39) suggests that the earliest part of the romance, the Prologue, which tells of the ancestors of Tristan and Mark, is designed to explain this antipathy by presenting previous Kings of Cornwall in a similarly bad light:

contempt and derision. The Demoisele herself calls them ‘mauvés et recreant’,<sup>19</sup> and in an earlier insult to Brunor, compares him unfavourably to them:

Qui avroit en sa compaignie vos et un des chevaliers de Cornoaille, je ne cuit mie que vos fussiez moins lenz que il seroit a foïr puis que ce venroit au besoig. Tost avriez le champ guerpi, puis que ce venroit au foïr.<sup>20</sup>

Daguenet’s keenness to undertake such combat that other knights regard as beneath them is naturally a source of amusement. More significantly, as Huot points out, it means that the knights of Logres can exploit this and use Daguenet to pile yet more dishonour upon their hated enemies. Daguenet performs for them their dirty work, and his *folie* ensures there can be no glory for the enemy.<sup>21</sup>

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En insistant sur la veulerie, la lâcheté et la cruauté des rois de Cornouailles et de leurs sujets, le prologue explique et justifie le caractère de Marc dans le roman en prose ainsi que le mépris du monde arthurien pour les chevaliers de Cornouailles.

This is disputed by Van Coolput (*Aventures querant*, p. 23), who points out that the ancestors criticised number only two. Instead, she traces the negative portrayal only as far as the failure of the Cornish to provide any resistance against the menacing arrival of the Irish *Morholt*:

C’est de ce même moment que date la *mauvestié* – qui sera désormais proverbiale – des sujets de Marc. Tristan se scandalise en voyant qu’il ne se présente personne pour défier le Morholt.

<sup>19</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §655, l.37, p. 230.

<sup>20</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §653, ll.24-26, p. 228.

<sup>21</sup> As Huot notes (*Madness*, p. 46):

The Arthurian habit of using Daguenet to terrorize knights from Cornwall is thus a means of inflicting double shame on the hapless visitors. Not only are they defeated: their defeat takes place at the hands of one who is not even a real knight, but only an illusion.

As she also says, Daguenet’s obsession with the knights of Cornwall has a further symbolic significance, in that both Daguenet and the Cornish knights are considered by the knights of Logres as beneath their dignity (*Madness*, p. 46):

Daguenet’s fondness for jousting with Cornish knights, and the delight taken by the knights of Logres in having him do so, is noteworthy. This detail appears in the prose *Tristan* and contributes to the opposition of Cornwall and Logres as kingdoms respectively embodying the nadir and apogee of courtliness and chivalry. Cornwall, land of chivalric ineptitude, intersects with the space of madness and folly. Daguenet le Fol and the knights of Cornwall are given the same symbolic coding, one that places them outside the boundaries of knighthood as defined by the Round Table.

As we shall see, in the course of the third episode in which Daguenet appears in the prose *Tristan*, Yvain also provides an explanation for Daguenet’s eagerness to take on the knights of Cornwall,

But while the instigators of the ‘gaberiers’ in which Daguenet is involved derive much pleasure from them, the same cannot be said of the victims. We are told that those who are not familiar with Daguenet and are unfortunate enough to encounter him suffer ‘plus de honte que d’honor’ regardless of the outcome of any combat. Although the precise nature of such dishonour is not explicitly stated, it seems likely to be derived from the chivalric custom of shunning unequal combat:

Pour un chevalier, il est malséant de se mesurer avec un adversaire de basse condition ou avec un invalide. Les usages chevaleresques veulent, en effet, que les affrontements n’aient lieu qu’entre personnes de même rang et de même force.<sup>22</sup>

Daguenet, as a *fou*, would surely fall into the category of such an opponent to be avoided, and the very act of entering into such combat would invite opprobrium upon the other knight. We have already seen how such an encounter with Daguenet reflected badly on the great Lancelot, whose capture by Daguenet brought him humiliation in front of the queen herself. In the prose *Tristan*, the members of Arthur’s court appear to have learnt to exploit this to their advantage and for their entertainment. They no longer simply enjoy the chance encounters between Daguenet and other knights, but actively seek out such situations where others can be provoked into humiliating themselves: Daguenet’s positive pleasure at taking part in this serves only to exaggerate this achievement.

To return to the story at hand, which principally concerns Brunor and the Demoisele, we can see that the arrival of this ‘fox’ also has a further resonance within the context of their relationship. When she first met Brunor, the Demoisele had mused loudly upon his suitability as a knight, and thus whether he deserved her

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namely, that he had once successfully taken two such knights prisoner, and was keen to repeat the feat. See Appendix Three, p. 276, ll.6-14, and below, p. 128.

<sup>22</sup> Ménard, *Le Rire et le sourire*, p. 306.

attention at all. She reasoned that it depended whether he is a true companion of the Round Table or if he was:

Des chevaliers qui par lor fox sens se font faire chevaliers, et tot maintenant qu'il sont fait chevalier en la meson le roi Artus, si se prisent devant toz les autres de chevaleries, et vont enprenant les aventures dont il ne porroient en nule maniere dou monde une sole metre a fin.<sup>23</sup>

From her words, it is not clear whether the Demoisele was referring to men who are truly insane, or simply using 'fox' as an insult to degrade those who are not worthy of the title of knight. It is surely hard to believe there would be allowed to exist a large number of *fou* knights, so the latter is more probably true. In any case, the very fact that she had made this comment in the first place is enough to draw attention to the irony of this current situation. Daguenet would certainly seem to fit the derogatory description, and this encounter with Brunor surely promises to prove whether the latter deserves such a low opinion as that held by the Demoisele.

And so we can return to the narrative itself. Following this quite lengthy consideration of Daguenet, the narrator turns once again to the events at hand. On his way out of the forest, Daguenet meets Brunor, 'chevalier a la Cote Mautaille'. Daguenet enquires of his squires who this other knight is, and they assure him that it is in fact a knight from Cornwall. The intention is clear: Daguenet, whose antipathy towards Cornish knights has been so recently explained to us, is to be provoked into challenging the stranger. The squires lose no time in encouraging a fight:

'Cist chevaliers qui ça vient, est il des chevaliers de Cornoaille?' 'Oïl, sans doute,' font il. 'Alez a li seürement. Or tost, Daguenet, faites le nos voler par terre! Or i parra que vos feroiz.'<sup>24</sup>

The jolly tone of this challenge - 'faites le nos voler par terre! Or i parra que vos feroiz' - from the squires underlines the atmosphere of 'gaberie' and 'envoisetüre', the light-hearted manner in which such jaunts seem to be undertaken.

<sup>23</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §651, ll.21-25, pp. 226-27.

<sup>24</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §655, ll.3-5, p. 229.



The key to the success of this deception is Daguenet's appearance and manner. Those close to him know of his reputation as 'fol' and the subsequent dishonour facing him in combat will bring. In order to bring this dishonour upon someone else, they must be led to believe there is nothing out of the ordinary about the knight they see before them.

Daguenet's ability to play this part well is illustrated vividly by his encounter with Brunor, as both he and the Demoisele remain completely unaware of Daguenet's true identity until it is explained to them afterwards by a squire:

'Dites moi,' fait ele, 'sire vallez, se Diex vos doint bone aventure, qui est cil chevaliers qui a esté abatuz?' Et cil comence a sozrire et dit: 'Demoisele, ce m'eïst Diex, c'est Daguenez, li fox le roi Artus.'<sup>25</sup>

Even though they both subsequently admit to having heard of Daguenet,<sup>26</sup> that neither recognised him is proof that his appearance and behaviour do not betray his *folie*. His approach to Brunor is apparently genuine:

Quant Daguenez entent ce que li escuier li dient, il prent tot maintenant son escu et son glaive qu'il portoient, et se met enmi le chemin, et s'escrie tant com il puet: 'Gardez vos de moi, sire chevaliers de Cornoaille. A joster vos estoit!'<sup>27</sup>

For the squires who witness this whole scene, and who know the truth of Daguenet's identity, this can only heighten the amusement. For Brunor, the encounter with Daguenet is doubly unfortunate. Overcome with enthusiasm to prove himself, he is the victim of a clever trick. It is certainly not truly his fault - there was no way he could tell that it was Daguenet he was fighting as even the Demoisele was unaware of this fact. And whilst the humiliation of the encounter itself is great enough, it is multiplied tenfold for Brunor when we consider the pressure under which he has

<sup>25</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §655, ll.22-25, pp. 229-30.

<sup>26</sup> The Demoisele – "En non Dieu," fait ele, "de Daguenet le fol ai je bien oï parler" (*Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §655, ll.26-27, p. 230); The Vallet - 'avoit oï parler [of Daguenet] le jor devant en la meson le roi Artus' (*Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §656, ll.2-3, p. 230).

<sup>27</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §655, ll.5-9, p. 229.

been placed by his situation. He is undertaking his very first knightly adventure,<sup>28</sup> his first real chance to prove his worth, added to which is the predisposition of his companion, the Demoisele Mesdisant, to finding him lacking, to finding an excuse by which to rid herself of this 'home chetif'.<sup>29</sup> For her, his humiliation is proof positive of her previous misgivings, and her satisfaction is reflected in the way she she summarises the situation for Brunor's benefit:

'Or sachiez,' fait ele, 'certainement que c'est Daguenet, le fol le roi Artus, ne l'en ne li fait mie porter armes por chose qu'il vaille, fors que por eschar et por gaberie des chevaliers de Cornoaille, qui sont mauvés et recreant. Avant que vos le coneüssiez estiez vos mauvés chevaliers et honiz, mes orandroit iestes vos tant honiz et avilliez que jamés por nule aventure dou monde ne porriez avoir honor.'<sup>30</sup>

Of course this is also the author's way of reiterating and emphasising the episode for the reader. If Daguenet's role in this episode was not clear before, it certainly is now: to bring shame and dishonour upon Brunor. The prediction of the Demoisele is to be proved right: Brunor will be unable to redeem himself, to the extent that the Demoisele's quest - the adventure of the *Destrois de Sorelois* - must eventually be accomplished by Lancelot.<sup>31</sup>

But this little outburst is not just for the benefit of Brunor. The overdetermined reiteration of the current shame - 'honiz' - and lack of hope of future redemption for Brunor- 'jamés por nul aventure dou monde ne porriez avoir honor' - fix in the mind

<sup>28</sup> Brunor had been involved in one incident which indicated his bravery, but this occurred before he was made a knight. Left alone at court with the ladies, he killed a lion who had broken the chains in which he was kept and was frightening the others (*Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §640-41, pp. 219-20).

<sup>29</sup> As part of her argument against allowing the Vallet to accompany her, the Demoisele is convinced that the Vallet will bring dishonour on her. In reply that he cannot, as being made knight is the greatest honour in the world, she replies: 'A ce m'acort je bien, fait ele, mes quant chevalerie est donee a home chetif, l'onor rement, n'il ne li torne mie a honor, mes a honte, car sa honte est achevee' (*Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §652, ll.32-34, p. 228).

<sup>30</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §655, ll.34-39, p. 230.

<sup>31</sup> See note 9.



of the audience the association between these negative qualities and Dagueuet. We are also reminded of the motivation of those who encouraged Dagueuet to undertake such affairs. The collocation of ‘eschar’<sup>32</sup> and ‘gaberie’ recalls the ‘gaberie’ and ‘envoiseüre’ of the original explanation,<sup>33</sup> while the switch from ‘envoiseüre’ to ‘eschar’ is a reflection of the malicious tone of the Demoisele’s attack on Brunor.

And so the Demoisele’s words bring to a close Dagueuet’s brief involvement with Brunor and leaves us with a handy ‘aide-mémoire’. She leaves us with the salient points regarding Dagueuet which have emerged in this episode, and whilst it may be a while before we meet him again, when we do, the purpose of this thorough preparation will become clear.

Our second meeting with Dagueuet occurs some 500 pages later, and it is the *folie* of Tristan himself which provides the context for this episode. Believing that Iseut has abandoned him for Kahedin, Tristan wanders off into the Morois forest and eventually loses his mind completely. He has been absent from the tale for a considerable time<sup>34</sup> and various characters have been in search of him, until,

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<sup>32</sup>The semantic range of ‘eschar’, whilst still encompassing the idea of a joke or having fun as does ‘envoiseüre’, also has more negative connotations. Tobler-Lommatzsch gives the following definitions: *eschar* - Verhöhnung, Verspottung, Hohn, Spott; *a eschar* - zum Scherz; *escharnir* - verhöhnen, verspotten, jem. oder etw. schädigen; refl. - sich lustig machen über etw. Godefroy adds: *eschar* - moquerie, raillerie, plaisanterie, dérision, honte. This move to a more negative nuance reflects, as I have said, the malice in the voice of the Demoisele, who wishes to impress upon Brunor the humiliation of being the butt of someone else’s joke.

<sup>33</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §654, l.5, p. 229.

<sup>34</sup> Tristan languishes in the forest in misery for a considerable time (*Tristan*, ed. Curtis, iii, §839-71, pp. 142-73) before he completely loses his senses and disappears from the narrative in §871 of *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, iii, p. 173. He reappears in §168 of *Tristan*, (*Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, p. 247). As Ménard’s edition picks up the story where Curtis’s ends, the gap between the appearances is approximately 250 pages.

following an account of Iseut's despair and Kahedin's death, the tale returns to Tristan in his *folie*:

Or dist li contes que, puis que mesires Tristrans se fu partis de la demoisele ki mesagiere estoit de Palamidés et il ot si du tout perdu le sens et le memoire k'il ne savoit k'il faisoit, il conmencha esranment a desrompre les dras k'il avoit vestu, ausi com uns forsenés, si k'il aloit par mi le Marés braiant et criant, saillant et courant, tout en tel maniere comme une beste forsenee. Et se aucuns me demandoit de coi il vivoit, je diroie k'il vivoit de char crue, car toute jour prenoit cha et la les bestes par la forest et puis mengoit la car atout le cuir, et se vivoit en tel maniere. En tel guise trespasloit sa famine.<sup>35</sup>

The description here, as we saw in Chapter One, is more than a little reminiscent of Yvain's wanderings as a *fou* in Chrétien, and of the older wild man tradition.<sup>36</sup> Tristan's appearance and behaviour have been described in detail and paint a graphic picture:

Braiant et criant, saillant et courant, tout en tel maniere comme une beste forsenee[...]si pales, si maigres, si despris, si tains, et si norchis du soleil et du halle[...]li pastour le tondirent et...li taignoient le vis cascun jour u d'une coulour u d'autre.<sup>37</sup>

Just as Yvain lost his mind through his rejection by his love, Tristan's imagined rebuff by Iseut has propelled him into the dark world of the wild man, where he lives as a beast amongst beasts.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §168, ll.1-12, pp. 247-48.

<sup>36</sup> See Chapter One, pp. 44 ff.

<sup>37</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §168, ll. 6-7, 23-24, 29-31, pp. 247-48.

<sup>38</sup> The origins of Tristan's madness can be found in previous romances, and have been discussed at length by Curtis in her article on the subject - see Curtis, 'Tristan *forseñé*: The Episode of the Hero's Madness in the *Prose Tristan*', pp. 10-22. The main similarities are between the portrayal of the Tristan as *fou* and Chrétien's Yvain: the same figure derived from the wild man tradition, with the same motifs of the fountain and the hermit. The cause and the cure of his affliction are also the same, the love of his lady: his supposed abandonment by Iseut drives Tristan to madness, whilst it is under her close attention that he finds his cure. We have also already noted parallels with Lancelot's periods of madness (see Chapter One, pp. 55-56), which serves as another example of how 'la réception de la biographie de Lancelot par l'auteur du *Tristan en prose* est, dans une large mesure, caractérisée par l'assimilation et l'imitation du cadre, des personnages, de nombreux thèmes et motifs de son modèle' (Van Coolput, *Aventures querant*, p. 218).

Daguenet's arrival at this particular point in the narrative is to say the least unexpected, and indeed rather puzzling. Amidst the hardships Tristan is suffering as the result of his illness and his maltreatment at the hands of the shepherds, arrives an incongruously cheerful group of souls:

Un jour avint, a chelui tans que mesire Tristrans estoit si maumenés de toutes coses, et de sa maladie et des bergiers, ki li faisoient tout l'anui du monde, que Daguenés, li fox le roi Artu, cevauchoit parmi le Marés en la compaignie de deus esquiers et s'aloit esbatant et soulachant par mi la forest.<sup>39</sup>

Immediately, questions are raised by this peremptory introduction which are not answered in a satisfactory way by the explanation which follows. What is Daguenet doing here? What is the significance of the presence of two squires to accompany him? What connection does this have with Tristan's situation? Instead of clarification, the narrator only seems to confuse matters further:

Et saciés que entour celui tans estoit mesire Daguenés venus en Cornuaille tout nouvelement de la maison le roi Artu pour veoir la roïne Iseut, et l'i avoient cil du roiaume de Logres envoié par soulas et par envoieüre.<sup>40</sup>

Who exactly has sent him, and for what reason? Is this a mission akin to those he was seen to undertake in the prose *Lancelot*, where he would disappear for days, to return and entertain the court with improbable tales of the knights he had defeated, this time with the squires as his witnesses to the true events?<sup>41</sup> Is he really destined to find Iseut, and with his *folie* entertain and cheer her in some way? Or is this scenario akin to that we have just left, where he has been sent out with a view to provoking amusing situations?

By raising these questions and failing to answer them adequately, the narrator prepares for the rather confused and confusing tone of the episode to follow.

<sup>39</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, ll.1-6, p. 248.

<sup>40</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, ll.6-10, pp. 248-49.

<sup>41</sup> In the prose *Lancelot*, the narrator claims Daguenet had a tendency to go off in search of adventure and return with tales of killing one or more knights (see Chapter Two, note 15). The tone of this description indicates that these claims were not taken seriously by those who heard them.

Daguenet's arrival sets in motion a series of events which will lead through a *melée* of misunderstanding and inappropriate behaviour to the ultimate consummation of the chiasmic relationship between the knight who becomes *fou* and the *fou* made knight, embodied in the capture of Daguenet's sword by Tristan. For Tristan, this symbolic transference of knightly power will mark the first step on the long road to the recovery of his sanity and his identity as a knight and will lead ultimately to his rejection of the dissolute court of King Mark of Cornwall and his embrace of life as a knight errant for Arthur. The appearance of 'li fox le roi Artu' at this lowest point in Tristan's life creates the bond between Tristan and Arthur's court which is the genesis of this move.

Confusion reigns from Daguenet's very first appearance: described as 'Daguenés, li fox le roi Artu',<sup>42</sup> we are then told that he is riding with two squires, just as he had when he met Brunor. Again, this raises the subject of his knighthood, but he lacks the attendant nomenclature - 'mesire'. Instead the narrator chooses to emphasise and imprint upon the minds of his audience the facts that he is *fou*, and that he belongs to King Arthur. Both of these facts hold significance in this context: his *folie* immediately links him to Tristan in his current state, and his belonging to Arthur's court sets him apart from those around him, labels him as a 'stray' into this land of Cornwall, and raises question as to the purpose of his presence.

This question, as we have seen, is not adequately answered in the text. Who are 'cil du roiaume de Logres'<sup>43</sup> who have sent him? If they have sent him to see Iseut 'par soulas et par envoieüre', who is to benefit? Is it the mysterious masters at court or the queen herself who should enjoy the outcome of this little foray?

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<sup>42</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, l.4, p. 248.

<sup>43</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, l.9, p. 249.

All of this is passed over by the author, who seems intent on emphasising the light-hearted nature of the expedition. The three newcomers arrive ‘esbatant et soulachant par mi la forest.’<sup>44</sup> The diverting tone of their mission has been set by those who have sent them ‘par soulas et par envoieüre’, and now we are presented with a scene full of light-hearted banter as the riders dismount by a spring to drink and the squires ‘entendoient a parler et a soulacier as paroles que Daguenés disoit’.<sup>45</sup> Even the horses contribute to the jovial atmosphere as they take their leave from the unsuspecting group: ‘cachant li uns l’autre, henissant et regibant et faisant merveilles.’<sup>46</sup> The tone is cheerful and frivolous, the picture drawn is that of innocent amusement.

Whilst the milieu of this scene enhances its idyllic nature - the beauty and refreshing qualities of the spring emphasise the uncomplicated pleasures of nature - it also raises an expectation in the audience of action to follow. The spring is widely associated with knightly adventure: it often refreshes not only the characters who find it, but also the narrative itself. A common place to meet new characters, old friends, undertake combat, the spring fulfils these roles in the prose *Tristan*, and justifiably prompts expectation of some such occurrence in the audience.<sup>47</sup> As we

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<sup>44</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, ll.5-6, p. 248.

<sup>45</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, ll.17-18, p. 249.

<sup>46</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, ll.15-16, p. 249.

<sup>47</sup> ‘Dans le *Tristan*, la fontaine conserve bien souvent son rôle classique de lieu de rencontre, de brève pause et de relance du récit’ (Baumgartner, *La Harpe et l’épée*, p. 76). Chênerie also discusses the importance and recurrence of the motif of the spring (Marie-Luce Chênerie, *Le Chevalier errant dans les romans arthuriens en vers des XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, Publications Romanes et Françaises, 172 (Geneva: Droz, 1986), pp. 187-89) that the spring ‘sera toujours liée à autre chose qu’au repos banal’ (p. 188), bringing with it from folklore, particularly Celtic, ‘les propriétés et les légendes...[dont] de multiples échos traversent la matière arthurienne, adaptés à l’idéalisation ou au renouvellement des aventures chevaleresques’ (p. 187). One example of the influence of such folklore was the tradition

shall soon see, the spring will also assume a far more significant role for Tristan. Bringing news of Tristan to Mark at court, Daguenet will be unable to identify his attacker, and will label him ‘fol de la fontaine’.<sup>48</sup> This label remains with him in his *folie* until he is eventually recognised by Mark and taken back to court to be healed by Iseut.<sup>49</sup>

Back with Daguenet and his squires, all is not well. The missing horses have caused them to chase fruitlessly through the forest until they come upon another spring: the one by which are gathered Tristan and the shepherds. The scene they come upon here is not unlike the one they have just left: like the squires, the

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surrounding the fairy Mélusine, as Laurence Harf-Lancner notes (*Les Fées au Moyen Âge: Morgane et Mélusine, la naissance des fées* (Paris: Champion, 1984), p. 84 ):

Du XIIe au XVe siècles en effet, on peut retrouver le schéma mélusinien dans les textes latins comme dans la littérature romanesque.

Integral to this tradition was the meeting of the fairy with the mortal who will fall in love with her, a meeting which would usually take place away from civilisation, often in a forest, and often in the presence of water (Harf-Lancner, *Les Fées au moyen âge*, p. 87):

La fée qui se hasarde loin de son empyrée, le mortel intrépide qui franchit les limites protectrices de son domaine pour s'enfoncer au coeur du monde sauvage, ne peuvent se joindre que sous les arbres tutélaires. Un deuxième élément se superpose souvent, se substitue parfois au cadre sylvestre: il s'agit de l'eau. La mer, une rivière ou une source président souvent aux accointances des deux héros.

One example of such a story is Marie de France's lai *Lanval*, where the eponymous hero is first approached by the maids of the Lady who will seduce him when he stops to rest beside a river. For an edition of *Lanval*, see Marie de France, *Lais*, ed. by A. Ewert, Blackwell's French Texts (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), pp. 58-74.

Thus we can see that the motif the encounter by the spring would be familiar to the medieval audience, who would bring with them the expectation that the choice of this milieu indicates some imminent adventure.

<sup>48</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §174, l.8, p. 254.

<sup>49</sup> Mark finds Tristan whilst out hunting. Tristan is again with the shepherds by a spring, but Mark does not initially recognise him because his appearance has altered so much. However, as he is about to rejoin the chase, Mark sounds his horn, and this prompts Tristan to wake up and call for his dog, Hudenc. This name Mark does recognise, and subsequently realises this is Tristan (*Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §§185-86). Tristan is then cured by Iseut at court. Mark is convinced that Iseut and Tristan

shepherds are being entertained by their ‘fou’ - this time it is Tristan who is the source of entertainment. Acting in a manner incongruous with his previous knightly stature, Tristan ‘avoit pris un des pastours et l’avoit jeté en la fontaine, si que petit s’en faloit k’il ne l’avoit illuec noiié.’<sup>50</sup> The companions of the unfortunate man seem to have little sympathy, instead they ‘se rioient adont mout fort’.<sup>51</sup>

It is this laughter which triggers off a series of misunderstandings and mutual incomprehension which eventually leads to the defeat of Daguenet by Tristan and the latter’s acquisition of Daguenet’s sword. For upon their arrival, the squires immediately demand to know if the shepherds have seen their horses. The shepherds, described as ‘niche et fol, si conme vilain de bois doivent estre’,<sup>52</sup> which is reflected in their apparent lack of empathy for their fellow who nearly drowned, do not interrupt their obvious enjoyment when they reply: ‘Si respondent as esquiers tout en riant: “Nous ne savom riens de vos cevaus.”’<sup>53</sup> The squires misinterpret the laughter as directed at them, and take immediate offence: ‘Li esquier, ki rire les virent, tinrent ceste cose a grant escar et a grant despit.’<sup>54</sup> Their anger prompts them to attack the shepherds violently: ‘si lour coururent esranment sus et les commencierent a batre mout asprement et a dire k’il lour enseignaissent lour cevaus, u il estoient tuit mort.’<sup>55</sup>

This over-reaction prompts an outbreak of inappropriate and wholly disproportionate behaviour on the part of everyone present. The previously

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are committing adultery, his suspicions already having been confirmed by the shepherds at the fountain, and banishes Tristan from Cornwall (*Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §189).

<sup>50</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, ll.32-34, p. 249.

<sup>51</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, l.31, p. 249.

<sup>52</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, ll.35-36, p. 249.

<sup>53</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, ll.36-38, p. 249.

<sup>54</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, ll.38-39, p. 249.

overdetermined atmosphere of relaxation and enjoyment exacerbates the disturbing nature of this dramatic turn to confusion and violence. This contrast is underlined forcefully by the narrator:

Li pastour, ki devant rioient et faisoient grant joie et grant feste de ce qu'il avoient veü faire  
a monsieur Tristan, quant il se virent ensi malmener, il conmenchierent a crier et a faire  
un doel mout merueilleus et tournerent en fuies, ensi com il porent, li un cha et li autre la,  
au miex k'il porent escaper.<sup>56</sup>

On seeing his squires attacking the shepherds, Daguenet picks up his sword and wades in after them, injuring four of the twelve.<sup>57</sup> Knight or no knight, attacking a group of unarmed shepherds, already described as 'niche et fol',<sup>58</sup> is not a course of action commensurate with the circumstances. His actions are a grotesque parody of knightly behaviour as he rushes in to defend his squires.

It is against such a parody that Tristan's reaction is to be measured, for he is now the only one who remains uninvolved in this burlesque scene. He could be forgiven for simply leaving the shepherds to their fate, for at their hands he has suffered greatly. It might also be accepted that in his current disturbed state of mind any one of a range of reactions would be possible - from joining in to taking to his heels and running away. Indeed, it is this disturbed state of mind that the author is keen to emphasise:

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<sup>55</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, ll.41-44, p. 250.

<sup>56</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §170, ll.1-6, p. 250.

<sup>57</sup> This is another example of overdetermination on the part of the author, who insists on telling us these details: 'si k'il en navra maintenant les quatre. Et sachiés que li pastour estoient douse' (*Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, ll.50-52, p. 250).

<sup>58</sup> See note 52. As Fritz points out ('Daguenet, ou le bouffon amoureux', p. 46), this precise description of the shepherds means that this scene is in fact an encounter between three different types of *folie*:

C'est donc à une confrontation entre trois figures de la folie que nous assistons dans cet épisode: folie des bergers à travers leur altérité sociale et spatiale (la forêt sauvage avec ses vilains par opposition à la cour et à son espace organisé avec ses chevaliers, folie de Daguenet, qui est inscrite dans sa nature ('fols naïs', selon le *Lancelot*), enfin folie accidentelle de Tristan, folie par amour.



Quant mesire Tristrans voit que li pastour aloient si grant doel demenant, tout fust il en tel maniere k'il n'eüst ne sens ne raison a celui point, com cil ki toute raison avoit perdue, si est il mout durement courechies, selonc son sens, du doel k'il voit que li pastour aloient demenant.<sup>59</sup>

This overdetermination serves not only to reiterate Tristan's present lack of function, but to remind the audience of the transitory nature of the situation- 'a celui point' - and that therefore this is not the usual state of affairs for this knight. This ardent qualification and almost excusing of Tristan's subsequent part in the fight contrasts starkly with the sardonic narratorial comment upon Daguenet's intervention:

Et mesire Daguenés li fox, ki tant estoit sages cevaliers con je vous ai ja conté par maintes fois cha ariere.<sup>60</sup>

Daguenet is referred to here for the first time as 'mesire', but this is no deference to knightly prowess. Instead its discordant combination with the 'li fox' sets the ironic tone in which 'sages' becomes a knowing insult, and Daguenet's behaviour is condemned for its *folie*.

Tristan on the other hand does not receive such scorn from the narrator. Much is made of the fact that, despite his evident lack of reason, Tristan still responds to the plight of the shepherds, who, whilst they have mistreated him, have also provided him with food, and who now face unprovoked and unfair attack from Daguenet and his squires. The repetition of the description of their plight forms a chiasmic frame around the description of Tristan's reaction as the narrator underlines that hindered as he is, Tristan is still able to empathise with the victims - albeit 'selonc son sens'.

Baumgartner says of Tristan in his state of *folie* that 'il ne garde de son passé que les pulsions et les réactions les plus instinctives',<sup>61</sup> and this is evidence of such

<sup>59</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §170, ll.6-11, p. 250. Ménard's edition is incorrectly numbered at this point: the line numbers skip from nine to fifteen. I am counting from line five, which is correctly numbered.

<sup>60</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, ll.44-46, p. 250.

<sup>61</sup> Baumgartner, *La Harpe et l'épée*, p. 78.

instinct. But measured against Daguenet's reaction, it becomes clear that even in his *folie*, his basic instinct is that of a knight, a sense of moral duty to defend against injustice. Where Daguenet was happy simply to jump in at the first sign of a fight with no consideration of the whys and wherefores - 'il n'i fait onques nul autre delaïement, ains met tout maintenant la main a l'espee'<sup>62</sup>- Tristan demonstrates an emotional reaction to the suffering of the shepherds - 'si il est mout durement courechies' - which becomes his motivation for attacking Daguenet. Even though the narrator clearly states that Tristan is restricted in his senses, there is no question of his simply joining in the fray. Instead, he is seen to consider his opponent - 'quant il a grant piece regardé Daguenet'<sup>63</sup> - and target him as the source of the trouble.

In this manner we reach the climax of the encounter, when Tristan and Daguenet come face to face. Tristan, the great knight who has lost his reason, now bears no resemblance to the proud and renowned knight that he once was:

Il fu si cangiés durement de toutes choses k'il n'avoit adont si carnel ami en tout le monde,  
se il en tel point le veïst, que il le peüst mie reconnoistre et ki en nule maniere du monde  
peüst quidier que ce fust mesire Tristrans.<sup>64</sup>

His opponent Daguenet represents the polar opposite of this.<sup>65</sup> 'Li fox le roi artu'<sup>66</sup> has the outward appearance of a knight - accompanied by two squires, riding through

<sup>62</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, ll.47-49, p. 250.

<sup>63</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §170, ll.16-17, p. 250. See note 59 regarding line numbers - I am here using the line numbers as they appear in the edition.

<sup>64</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §168, ll.25-29, p. 248.

<sup>65</sup> Indeed, as Huot suggests (*Madness*, p. 56), Daguenet is the polar opposite of Tristan in the wider context of knighthood in general:

[...] Tristan is the opposite of Daguenet, for, whereas the former embodies the failings that the knights of Logres are free of, the latter embodies all of the chivalric excellence that is lacking in the other knights of Cornwall.

This is highlighted by the irony of the apparent reversal of these positions at this point, in that it is Daguenet who bears the outward signs of this great knighthood, yet still Tristan proves himself the better knight.

<sup>66</sup> See note 42.

the woods, carrying a sword - accoutrements which we are told elsewhere that he is sometimes given for the entertainment of his audience: 'li escuier l'avoient fait le jor armer par gaberie et par envoiseüre'.<sup>67</sup> Even his knighthood was a joke: 'Cil Dagenes estoit fox, si l'avoit l'en fait chevalier par envoiseüre.'<sup>68</sup>

Unarmed as he is, Tristan, the great knight who has lost his identity through *folie*, takes on the armed Daguenet, who gained his knighthood by virtue of his *folie*, and throws him to the ground 'com se ce fust uns enfes'.<sup>69</sup> This impressive victory is won easily in spite of the deleterious effect of the hardships he has been suffering, illustrated by his subsequent inability to catch up with the fleeing squire:

Mesire Tristrans l'encauce mout durement, mais ataindre ne le puet mie, com cil ki n'estoit mie d'assés si legiers com il soloit estre, car assés avoit souffert mal et mesaise en la compaignie des pastours.<sup>70</sup>

The symbolic significance of this victory is made clearer by its result: Daguenet's power, symbolised by the sword he carried, has been physically knocked out of him by Tristan. Picking up the sword from Daguenet's apparently lifeless body, Tristan transfers the most potent symbol of knightly power<sup>71</sup> from the undeserving hand of one *fou* back into the hands of one who, in the recent past, wielded such a sword with prowess. This incident is pivotal in Tristan's rehabilitation: from now on, although he does lose the sword itself when it is

<sup>67</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §654, ll.4-5, p. 229.

<sup>68</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, ii, §654, ll.6-7, p. 229.

<sup>69</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §170, ll. 21-22, p. 250.

<sup>70</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §170, ll.39-43, p. 251.

<sup>71</sup> In the prose *Lancelot*, as she sends Lancelot to court to be knighted, the Lady of the Lake explains the significance of the various parts of a knight's armour. Of the sword, she says: 'Espee si est de toutes armes la plus honeree et la plus haute et chele qui plus a dignité' (*Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XXIa, §14, p. 252).

confiscated by the hermit,<sup>72</sup> his progress towards a cure and return to knighthood is unerring.

At the heart of this is the symbolic transfer of knightly power from the hands of ‘Daguenés, li fox le roi Artu’<sup>73</sup> to Tristan. In the process leading up to this moment, during which Tristan has demonstrated a residual knightly instinct, we have been given reason to believe there is some hope for Tristan’s recovery and the restoration of his knighthood. The ease with which he has been able to toss aside Daguenet illustrates his enduring physical prowess, but it is the sword in his hand which combines these factors to epitomise Tristan’s imminent return to knighthood.

When he arrived, it was Daguenet who brought with him all the accoutrements of knighthood, horse, sword, armour, squires. He soon proved he was not capable of using them. Gradually, he has lost them all, and finally proved himself unworthy of carrying the sword through his unjustified attack on the shepherds. Tristan arrived with nothing, but his actions have proved he still retains the seed of knighthood. At this moment, as the two *fous* face each other, it is this residual knightly instinct which separates them. In taking the sword, Tristan externalises his superiority. The most potent symbol of a knight’s power - his sword - is now in the hands of a man who, whilst *fou* ‘a celui point’,<sup>74</sup> will eventually regain his senses and prove himself worthy of the title of Sir Knight.

However, until that cure is achieved at the hands of Iseut,<sup>75</sup> Tristan remains *fou*, a fact attested to by his behaviour once he has gained hold of the sword. He

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<sup>72</sup> ‘[The hermit] li oste l’espee d’encoste lui, pour ce k’il em peüst mal faire a nul home k’il encontrast’ (*Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §171, ll.29-30, p. 252).

<sup>73</sup> See note 42.

<sup>74</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, §170, ll.8-9, p. 250.

<sup>75</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §189, ll.4-9, p. 276.

immediately turns to attack Daguenet's unarmed squires, severing the arm of one and causing the other to flee for his life:

Mesire Tristrans li taut tot maintenant l'espee k'il tenoit et puis court a ses esquiers et en fier l'un si durement k'il li trenche le brach tout outre, et chil chiet maintenant a tere et se pasme de la grant doulour que il sent. Quant li autres voit celui cop, il n'est pas tres bien aseür, car il voit tout apertement que, s'il atent celui ki l'espee tient, k'il est mors sans merci trouver. Et pour ce tourne il en fuies, tant com il puet, et laisse ses compaignons en la barate.<sup>76</sup>

His lack of mercy for such harmless opponents is confirmation that whilst he may demonstrate certain knightly instincts, it is still his *folie* which prevails.

The author continues to emphasise the *folie* of Tristan as he describes his next move. Leaving the scene of his encounter with Daguenet, Tristan heads for the home of a hermit who has previously given him food. The narrator comments that to turn to such a source of help is only natural:

Et ce est bien sans doute la coustume et la maniere du fol que, tout soit il ensi k'il ait du tout perdu le sens et la raison, si se traist il mout volentiers la u il troeve pitié et douçour.<sup>77</sup>

This is accompanied by the reiteration of the description of Tristan's *folie* we found at the very beginning of the episode:

Mesire Tristrans s'en vait vers l'ermitage, l'espee en la main, toute nue, saillant et braiant com une beste forsenee.<sup>78</sup>

And so we are informed that Tristan's *folie* remains. This return to a certain status quo is underlined when it is pointed out that the hermit is familiar with Tristan's behaviour: 'Et quant il voit vers lui venir monsigneur Tristran, si esragié et forsené com il savoit que il estoit'.<sup>79</sup> But it is precisely in such direct comparison with the earlier description that the one major development is highlighted: Tristan now holds the sword, the symbol of his recovery and return to knighthood.

<sup>76</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §170, ll.25-33, pp. 250-51.

<sup>77</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §171, ll.3-6, p. 251.

<sup>78</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §171, ll.7-9, p. 251. Compare with §168, ll.6-7 quoted above, see note 37.

<sup>79</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §171, ll.10-12, p. 251.

Just as Tristan, whose *folie* is characterised by its bestial, wild man associations, sought ‘pitié et douçour’ in the familiar surroundings of the hermit’s house in the forest, so Daguenet, ‘li fox le roi Artu’ seeks comfort in the familiar environment of the court. Waiting fearfully until he can be certain his persecutor has left, Daguenet then leaps to his feet and sets off towards Tintagel as fast as he can. His arrival at court is witnessed by many, who describe the spectacle to the king:

‘Sire, nouveles vous aportom assés merveilleuses: Daguenés, li fox cevaliers de la maison le roi Artu, s’en vient devers la forest du Marés tout a pié; et hui matin se parti de chaiens mout ricement montés en la compaignie de deus esquiers, et or revient tous seus et tout a pié, et s’en vient afuiant tant com il puet, ausi tost con se tous li mondes le cachast a mort.’<sup>80</sup>

Here again, as we have already had for Tristan, we find the emphasis on the disparity between Daguenet’s situation as we encountered it at the beginning of the episode and how he now finds himself. His *folie* is not in question: just as Tristan was still ‘saillant et braiant com une beste forsenee’, Daguenet remains ‘li fox cevaliers de la maison le roi Artu’. Where for Tristan the significance lay in what he had gained - the sword, symbol of knighthood - for Daguenet the significance is what he has lost. All vestiges of knighthood have gone - the squires, the horse, the sword - and what is left is his *folie*. His loss is Tristan’s gain, and the fact that Daguenet still carries the empty scabbard - ‘il portoit encore le fuerre de s’espee’<sup>81</sup> - ensures that this is not lost on the reader. This is later reiterated when King Mark himself notices the absence of the sword and is told by Daguenet that it has been taken by his attacker, the *fou*: ““Li faus,” fait Daguenés, “le me toli.””<sup>82</sup>

King Mark attempts to elicit from Daguenet an explanation of his ignominious return to Tintagel, but cannot make any sense of Daguenet’s words. Unable to

<sup>80</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §173, ll.4-10, p. 253.

<sup>81</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §173, l.23, p. 253.

<sup>82</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §174, l.23, p. 254.

identify his attacker, Daguenet refers to Tristan as the ‘fol de la fontaine’,<sup>83</sup> a cognomen which will remain with Tristan throughout his *folie*. All Daguenet seems to be able to do is repeat again and again warnings about him:

Rois March, se tu veus faire sens et garder que maus ne te viegne, garde toi du fol de la fontaine! Car, s'il te prent par aucune aventure ausi com il fist moi, il te debriserà tous les os, ausi com il a hui fait a moi!<sup>84</sup>

Mark finally reaches the conclusion that they will get no more sense out of him:

Li rois March, ki bien voit et connoist certainement que par Daguenet ne porroit il riens aprendre de cest affaire, se taist et le laisse illuec reposer.<sup>85</sup>

For Mark, the object of this conversation was to find out who had perpetrated this attack. The audience, however, is already aware that the ‘fol de la fontaine’ is Tristan, and this allows us to read a greater meaning into Daguenet’s apparent ramblings. It has been established that the parallels between these two characters are important: it was their common *folie* which precipitated their combat and Tristan’s subsequent acquisition of the sword. What Daguenet now seems to demonstrate is his own awareness of this relationship. The first sign of this occurs when he is asked where his sword is. Replying that his attacker took it, he continues in a rather obscure fashion:

‘Il estoit faus, et pour ce se je estoie faus ausi com il estoit, ne m’ala il pas espargnant, ains a tant fait que je m’en sent.’<sup>86</sup>

<sup>83</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §174, l.8, p. 254.

<sup>84</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §174, ll.6-10, p. 254.

<sup>85</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §174, ll.30-32, p. 254.

<sup>86</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §174, ll.23-25, p. 254. Daguenet’s words here are not entirely clear. He is referring to the fact that he suffered, ‘je m’en sent’, and that Tristan did not spare him ‘ne m’ala il pas espargnant’. The exact meaning of ‘pour ce se je estoie faus ausi com il estoit’ is a little obscure, but I interpret the whole as ‘He was mad, and even though I was as mad as him, he did not spare me, and therefore did such to me that I am now suffering’. (Huot translates this sentence thus: He was a fool, and even if I was as much a fool as he was, he didn’t spare me, but hurt me so that I still feel it’ (Huot, *Madness*, p. 54). This roughly corresponds to my own interpretation).

Daguenet seems to be saying that, even though he was as *fou* as his attacker, their common plight did not save him from being a victim of the ‘fol de la fontaine’. He draws a clearer parallel in his parting comment to the court in general:

‘Gardés vous de mon compaignon, le fol de la fontaine, k’il ne vous face autresi com il a hui fait de moi.’<sup>87</sup>

This time it is clear that Daguenet regards himself as some kind of equal to Tristan, his ‘compaignon’.

Just as in losing his sword to Tristan, he provided the symbolic basis for Tristan’s recovery and return to court, in bringing news of his ‘compaignon’ in *folie* to court, Daguenet provides the practical impetus for this process. His story of the ‘fol de la fontaine’ prompts Mark and his court to speculate upon the identity of this mysterious character, until they decide that it must be Matan le Brun, a good knight of Mark’s court who lost his mind following the loss of his lady love.<sup>88</sup> His love for Matan causes Mark to hunt for him in order to bring him back to court and have him cured, a search which in the end results in Tristan returning to court and being restored to health.

From this confusion of misapprehension and inappropriate behaviour, we can begin to see emerging two interesting strands concerning the significance of the apparently chance meeting of Daguenet and Tristan. On a narrative level, the symbolic significance of the transfer of Daguenet’s sword to Tristan cannot be ignored, as we have seen above. It is the pivotal point in the episode, indeed in Tristan’s *folie*. But I would also like to look at the implications of the most obvious point of comparison between the two characters: their *folie*.

<sup>87</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §174, ll.28-30, p. 254.

<sup>88</sup> The story of Matan le Brun’s sad plight is found in *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §176, pp. 256-58.



As we have seen, Daguenet arrives on the scene more or less at the same time as Tristan returns to the narrative, who has been absent from the romance for a considerable length of time.<sup>89</sup> His arrival follows directly the extremely detailed description of the effects of Tristan's *folie* upon the hero. The narrator both reiterates the description of his descent into *folie* that was given at the time of his departure from the narrative<sup>90</sup> and then goes on to describe the hardships of the life this has led to, living from 'char crue'<sup>91</sup> and suffering maltreatment from shepherds for the sake of the bread they give him.<sup>92</sup> Particular emphasis is put on the drastic changes in his physical appearance:

Pour la grant mesaise k'il soufroït de fain et de froit, de mal gesir et de toutes autres durtés  
que morteus hom porroit souffrir devint il si pales, si maigres, si despris, si tains et si  
noirchis du soleil et du halle k'il fu si cangiés durement de toutes choses.<sup>93</sup>

which render him unrecognisable to anyone who knew him.

This detailed and overdetermined description of his life as a *fou* establishes for the reader a dark and depressing picture of the effects of the illness. This is fresh in their minds when onto the scene rides 'Daguenés, li fox le roi Artu'.<sup>94</sup> This direct juxtaposition cannot fail to invite from the audience an immediate desire for contrast

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<sup>89</sup> See note 34.

<sup>90</sup> Compare *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, iii, §871, ll.9-15, p. 173: 'il li vient au cuer une si grant rage et une si grant forsenerie en la teste qu'il en pert tout le sens et le memoire si plenement qu'il ne set qu'il fait. Il ne set mes s'il est Tristanz ou non. Il ne li sovient mes de madame Yselt ne dou roi Marc, ne de riens qu'il onques feïst. Il va courant par le Morrois, une ore ça et l'autre ore la, criant et breant come beste forsenee' with the opening lines of Tristan's return to the narrative in *Tristan*, quoted above - see note 38.

<sup>91</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §168, l.9, p. 248. See also Chapter One, note 117.

<sup>92</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §168, ll.14-18, p. 248: 'Et mout repairoit volentiers entr'aus pour ce k'il li donnoient de lour pain. Mais il li vendoient mout cierement aucune fois, car il l'aloient batant et ferant si asprement que mout estoit grant merveille comment il le soufroït.'

<sup>93</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §168, ll.21-25, p. 248.

<sup>94</sup> See note 42.

and comparison: what will this encounter with a fellow *fou* tell us about Tristan's own situation?

To begin with, the contrasts could not be more clear. From the dark and unhappy world of Tristan's existence we emerge into the lighthearted world of Daguenet and his squires, a world of 'gaberie' and 'envoiseüre',<sup>95</sup> riding 'esbatant et soulachant par mi la forest'.<sup>96</sup> The glimpse we get of Daguenet's life could not get any further from the hardships Tristan undergoes, and such direct comparison only exaggerates his suffering.

This is particularly evident when we consider their relationship to those around them. Tristan lives alone in the forest, isolated from court and any vestiges of his previous life. He spends a lot of time with the shepherds, 'niche et fol',<sup>97</sup> very much outside the civilised world of the court themselves, described as 'vilain de bois'.<sup>98</sup> They feed him, but then take as their price the primitive pleasure they derive from goading and maltreating Tristan. Daguenet on the other hand has a very different social relationship. Living at court, he too is a source of entertainment for others, but as we have seen, there is no trace of malice towards him, or ill treatment. Provoking fun from Daguenet involves playing up to his own prejudices, exploiting his willingness to fight, letting him humiliate others. Whilst his foolish behaviour may cause amusement, as Fritz points out,<sup>99</sup> he is more the instrument than the object of laughter.

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<sup>95</sup> See note 16.

<sup>96</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, ll.5-6, p. 248.

<sup>97</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, l.35, p. 249.

<sup>98</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, l.36, p. 249.

<sup>99</sup> 'Il n'est plus tant l'objet même du rire qu'un instrument; on ne rit plus de Daguenet, mais on rit à travers lui.' (Fritz, 'Daguenet, ou le bouffon amoureux', p. 43)

Already we can see how direct contrast and comparison of Tristan's situation with that of Daguenet can inform our view of the hero, illustrating far better than any description could just how low this great knight has fallen from the pleasures and privileges of his civilised life as a knight.

These parallels are continued into the scene of the fight itself. It is notable that Daguenet and his squires manage to lose their horses before they meet up with Tristan and the shepherds. Not only does this serve as the spark which ignites the flames of violence when the squires accuse the shepherds of hiding their mounts, but it also places all the protagonists on the same physical level. Already the symbols of Daguenet's knighthood are being eroded, a process which will of course climax in Tristan's symbolic acquisition of Daguenet's sword, and lead to Daguenet's subsequent shameful and humiliating entry into Tintagel denuded of any dignity he had possessed.<sup>100</sup>

There then remains one further inequality: the sword. The power which the sword brings to its bearer also carries with it responsibilities: it is unseemly for a knight to challenge someone who bears no arms.<sup>101</sup> As we have seen, Daguenet, in his *folie*, is happy to join in the fray immediately in a parody of knightly behaviour, with no thought or consideration. Whilst indeed Tristan later does appear to overstep the mark when he carries on to attack the squires, initially he displays a significant level of apparent consideration. The narrator emphasises strongly that whilst Tristan is still at this point very much in the throes of his *folie*, his reaction to the situation is to defend those who are being unjustly attacked.

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<sup>100</sup>The bearers of the news of Daguenet's arrival at Tintagel comment: 'hui matin se parti de chaiens mout ricement montés en la compaignie de deus esquiers, et or revient tous seus et tout a pié' (*Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §173, ll.7-9, p. 253).

<sup>101</sup> See note 22.

It is the comparison between the reactions of Daguenet and Tristan which really illuminates this very important aspect of Tristan's behaviour. As Baumgartner points out, in his *folie*, Tristan is driven only by instinct.<sup>102</sup> If the same is said of Daguenet, then the gulf between them becomes clear. Daguenet's instinct leads him to attack with his sword a group of unarmed and probably harmless shepherds. If this is the instinctive response of a *fou*, then Tristan's reaction sets him apart. Even in his *folie* - which as I have said, is strongly emphasised by the author - Tristan's instinct leads him to defend the shepherds. They are currently the victims of the greatest injustice - unprovoked attack from first the squires then Daguenet. However, they have also been responsible for much of the misery and humiliation which Tristan has suffered, and to join in with Daguenet and his squires would be a simple way to exact revenge.

This reaction is surely evidence that his knightly vocation is so deeply embedded within him that even when he is barely functioning either physically or mentally he is still subject to the most noble knightly instinct to defend against injustice. He is little more than an animal - 'il aloit par mi le Marés braiant et criant, saillant et courant, tout en tel maniere conme une beste forsenee'<sup>103</sup> - unrecognisable by anyone who knew him as a knight. But faced with the need instinct takes over. His consideration leads him to target Daguenet, not only because he is the greatest threat to the shepherds, but also because as a knight he is bound to fight only an equal: at this moment, unarmed and *fou* as Tristan is, Daguenet fulfils this role of worthy opponent.

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<sup>102</sup> See note 61.

<sup>103</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, §168, ll.6-7, p. 247-48.

This moment, when Daguenet and Tristan come face to face, epitomises the relationship between the ‘li fox le roi Artu’<sup>104</sup> and ‘le fol de la fontaine’<sup>105</sup>. Daguenet, made knight by virtue of his *folie*, with all the outward appearance of knighthood, faces Tristan in single combat. He even has the advantage of a sword. But Tristan, for whom the only vestiges of knighthood that remain are his deepest instinct, proves his superiority by simply brushing Daguenet aside.

Quite apart from the symbolism of the sword which Tristan then picks up, this arousal of Tristan’s knightly instinct awakens hope in the reader. It points to a real possibility that, unlike Daguenet, Tristan is not doomed to permanent *folie*. This possibility is hinted at by the narrator when emphasising the *folie* Tristan is suffering: his description is qualified with ‘a celui point’,<sup>106</sup> alluding to its possible transitory nature. This is important, because until he is cured by Iseut, there is little further indication of recovery. By indicating that Tristan still has what it takes to be a great knight, the audience is encouraged to believe there will be a recovery and return to normal service.

We can now see how Daguenet acts as a prism through which Tristan is refracted. Daguenet is almost an anti-Tristan: the only common factor is their *folie*, and beyond that Daguenet represents the opposite to Tristan in every way. Despite the appearance of knighthood, Daguenet neither thinks nor acts like a true knight: even denuded of his armour and of his mind, Tristan is still a great knight at heart.

The juxtaposition of these two characters encourages the discerning reader to consider in more depth Tristan and his *folie*. But even when they are separated,

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<sup>104</sup> See note 42.

<sup>105</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §172, ll.16-17, p. 253. This is how Daguenet describes him to Mark at Tintagel, and how he is known by then until his true identity is revealed by Tristan’s dog, Hudenc.

<sup>106</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §170, ll.8-9, p. 250.

Daguenet continues to cast an influence over our view of Tristan. Once he has recovered his senses and ensured that his attacker is no longer around, Daguenet takes himself as fast as he can back to the court of King Mark. Ignorant of the true identity of his attacker, he labels him ‘le fol de la fontaine’,<sup>107</sup> which is adopted by Mark for want of a true identification. This label stays with Tristan throughout his *folie*, until his true identity is revealed by his dog, Hudenc.<sup>108</sup>

Whilst Baumgartner calls this new identity ‘dégradante’,<sup>109</sup> Daguenet’s simple description of Tristan plays a far more important role than just to detract from Tristan’s reputation. In fact, the opposite is quite the truth. For, by his remaining anonymous until he is been brought back to Mark’s court, Tristan’s reputation as a knight remains intact. As far as everyone is concerned, he has left Cornwall, and the *fou* running about the forest is another knight, Matan le Brun. His combat with Daguenet, his sojourn with the shepherds, even his victory over the giant Taulas are all ascribed to Matan. When the truth is finally uncovered, thanks to Tristan’s faithful hound, the author does not give time for the implications to sink in. Within forty lines, Tristan is identified, cured and banished - the tale can now move on. Tristan’s *folie* can be forgotten so easily because, for the members of Mark’s court, it has not been an issue.

But more interesting is the rest of Daguenet’s story as he tells it to Mark. Arriving at court deprived of his horse, sword and squires, exhausted from the effort and raving about a *fou* in the forest, the picture we have of Daguenet suddenly comes far closer to the one we had of Tristan. He illustrates how easily he has shed his

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<sup>107</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §172, ll.16-17, p. 253.

<sup>108</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §188, ll.26-7, p. 276.

<sup>109</sup> Baumgartner, *La Harpe et l’épée*, p. 78:

Dans le *Tristan* en revanche, le héros acquiert en ce même lieu [by a spring] l’identité autre et dégradante [...] du fol de la fontaine.

sham appearance of knighthood in the face of a true hero. More importantly, as we have seen, Daguenet appears to recognise the equivalence between himself and Tristan. He refers to ‘mon compaignon, le fol de la fontaine’,<sup>110</sup> and when asked where his sword is, he replies that it was taken by the *fou* who did not spare him, even though he, Daguenet, was also *fou*. It is this very confirmation of their equivalence in terms of their *folie* that highlights the impact of the transfer of the sword, that which symbolises the very essence of their dissimilarity: *fou* they may both be, but only one is a true knight.

Thus we can now see how Tristan’s encounter with Daguenet is pivotal for Tristan’s recovery. It sets off the chain of events in the narrative which leads directly to his exile from Cornwall by Mark, and thus to the beginning of his adventures as knight errant of the Round Table in the kingdom of Logres.

Daguenet makes his third appearance in the prose *Tristan* some time later in the romance. Again his appearance is unexpected, but to a large extent the role he plays is familiar. He is used by Dinadan and several of his companions of the Round Table in a scheme to humiliate King Mark of Cornwall, who has come to Logres alone and incognito to kill Tristan.<sup>111</sup> Deceiving Mark into believing Daguenet is in fact Lancelot, Dinadan engineers a meeting of the two. The companions then take great delight in watching Mark flee in terror through the wood.

Having achieved this goal, the plan then backfires. In his flight, Mark meets Palamedes, also incognito, who offers to defend Mark against all comers. He defeats first Daguenet, then three more of the knights, who are duty bound to avenge their

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<sup>110</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §174, ll.28-29, p. 254.

<sup>111</sup> See Löseth, *Analyse*, §207.

companions. Their humiliation is compounded by Palamedes's refusal to identify himself, thus denying them the possibility later of avenging themselves.

It is informative first to consider the context of this appearance. Mark has come to Logres incognito to seek out and kill Tristan. Recognising him as a knight from Cornwall,<sup>112</sup> Dinadan takes an immediate dislike to Mark, and challenges him to accompany him to Arthur's court to meet Tristan, who he claims is soon to cause the shaming of Cornwall.<sup>113</sup> Mark agrees to this, and on their journey Dinadan engineers a series of adventures to cause Mark's humiliation. In his most recent exploit, Mark has shown himself up as a coward when he reneged on an oath to defend Dinadan come what may, but in fact fled in the face of danger. Unfortunately for Mark, the so-called enemies from whom he fled were in fact six of Dinadan's companions of the Round Table.

Whilst the companions are discussing what they should do about this knight from Cornwall, Giflet appears, and with him arrive Daguenet and several motifs which are familiar from Daguenet's previous appearances. Here we find a series of recognisable factors which revive Daguenet in the mind of the reader, reminding us of what we have already learnt about him. By picking up these familiar threads, the author removes the need for more detailed explanation, whilst also provoking in the reader a set of expectations associated with Daguenet and his antics.

For example, before we are even told of Daguenet's arrival, familiar vocabulary begins to appear. Giflet is described as 'chevaliers assez envoisiez, et bon gabeor avoit en lui.'<sup>114</sup> This immediately recalls the collocation so closely associated

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<sup>112</sup> As we have already seen, there is a general antipathy on the part of Arthur's knights towards the knights of Cornwall. See note 18.

<sup>113</sup> Löseth, *Analyse*, §211.

<sup>114</sup> Appendix Three, p. 276, l.4.



with Daguenet from his first appearance - have we finally discovered the identity of one of 'them' who would send Daguenet out on jaunts 'par gaberie et par envoiseüre'?<sup>115</sup> Other vocabulary from this familiar semantic range reinforces these first impressions. Describing the knights' reaction to Daguenet's appearance, 'joie' is used three times in quick succession, strongly emphasising the pleasure his antics inspire, a correlation here as elsewhere to the 'gaberie' and 'envoiseüre':

Qant li chevaliers virent Giflet, se il li firent feste et joie, ce ne fet pas a demander, si n'orent  
granment greignor joie de lui qil orent de Duganet. A celui firent il toute la joie, porce que  
trop le soulaçoient et fesoit tout adés la greingnor folies del monde.<sup>116</sup>

This use of 'folie' also picks up the overdetermined emphasis on Daguenet's *folie* found above: 'le fol le roi Artus, un chevaliers fol dont je vous ai alcune fois conté en ce livre mesmes.'<sup>117</sup> Here the author also acknowledges explicitly that these implicit references are to a character he expects us to recognise, and in a very particular guise.

Perhaps the most obvious indication that Daguenet is now established in the mind of the author, and that he expects the same to be true for the reader, is his specific use of the cognomen *le fol le roi Artus*. Found in both other episodes, but each time in combination with the name 'Daguenet', it is now used alone to introduce the new character. The name 'Daguenet' itself is not used until a couple of lines later, and then it stands alone - 'qu'il orent de Daguenet'. The author now seems to have the confidence that, aided by his little hints, his audience will recognise the two as one and the same person.

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<sup>115</sup> See note 16.

<sup>116</sup> Appendix Three, p. 276, ll.7-10.

<sup>117</sup> Appendix Three, p. 276, ll.5-6.

One factor remains to be recalled, and that is most effectively achieved by Dagenet himself. Hearing the others speak of a knight from Cornwall, he leaps forward and says:

'Ou sont li chevaliers de Cornoaille? Leissiez les venir entre mes meins ! Autre chose je ne vos demant.'<sup>118</sup>

Not only does this vividly recall the detailed description of his antipathy towards such knights as found in the first episode, but it also leaves little doubt in the mind of the audience as to what will happen next. In the context of Mark's recent humiliation at the hands of Dinadan, and Dagenet's obvious eagerness to fight such a knight, it would surely be cruel to deprive him of this chance.

With this expectation fresh in our minds, the author takes the opportunity to digress slightly in order to try to answer a question which has not been previously addressed - why is Dagenet so keen to fight knights from Cornwall? Yvain takes it upon himself to explain to his companions that Dagenet once defeated two Cornish knights and took them as prisoners back to Arthur's court:

'Sengnors,' fet messire Yveins, 'volez vos que je vos die por quoi Duganet se vet si poroffrant contre les chevaliers de Cornoaille? Se vos ne le savez, je le vos dirai. Car je sai bien dont cest grant hardiment li vient. Il avint ja que .ii. chevaliers de Cornouaille, qi compaignon estoient, vindrent el roiaume de Logres. Ce ne sai ge mie por que le acheison, mes tant vos sage bien a dire que Duganet les conquist andus et les amena prison andus en la meson le roi Artus. Et je estoie adonc laienz qant il vindrent. Por ce sage bien que por cele aventure qi avint a monseignor Duganet des chevaliers de Cornoaille, porce qil les a esprouvez et qil les conoit, en paroule il si hardiement.'<sup>119</sup>

What appears to have happened is that the author has looked back on what he has already written about Dagenet and found this gap on our knowledge, which he now tries to fill with this explanation. However, the overall effect is rather awkward: Yvain proffers this information with no prompting or any apparent interest from

<sup>118</sup> Appendix Three, p. 276, l.19 – p. 276, l.1.

<sup>119</sup> Appendix Three, p. 277, ll.6-14.

anyone else. No one comments on it afterwards, and it appears to have no impact on the episode itself. It feels almost as if the author has added it as an afterthought.

Basing ourselves in the knowledge of Daguenet which we have built up over the course of the prose *Tristan*, we may have difficulty in believing that he could defeat one let alone two knights, even if they are Cornish. On further consideration, we must realise that the only combat we have seen him undertake is against Brunor, knight of Arthur's court, and Tristan, hero of the romance, neither of whom fits the succinct description ascribed to Cornish knights by the Demoisele Mesdisant.<sup>120</sup> We have not seen him actually fight a Cornish knight. Whilst this makes the idea slightly easier to accept, the whole explanation really does not seem to make a great deal of sense. Even if we accept that what Yvain says is true, that Daguenet managed to capture the knights and bring them to court, it does not really explain the origin of this fixation.

What it does do, however, is to raise the possibility in both the minds of the both the companions and reader that he could repeat this feat, this time against King Mark. This provides the basis of the plan proposed by Gifflet so soon afterwards - that they should deceive Mark into facing Daguenet in combat. Thus they would both fulfil Daguenet's ambition, and provide themselves with entertainment:

'Vos en porriez veoir un grant soulaz et aconplir la volonte Duganet. Et vos dirai en quele maniere. Qant nos devrons demain chevauchier, nos le ferons armer des armes a l'un de nos, et cheval ne li convient il mie doner, car il l'a bons. Nos chevaucherons matin, et sitost come nos istrans hors de cest chastel, avant que li chevaliers de Cornoaille s'en aille. Qant nos serons mis el chemin, nos chevaucherons a la matinee suef le petit pas, et atendrons tant que li chevaliers de Cornoaille nos aura ataint qui tost nos atindra, ce sage bien. Et qant il aprochera de nos, nos le mostrerons a Duganet, et ferons qil li lessera corre le cheval et il le fera trop volontiers.'<sup>121</sup>

<sup>120</sup> 'Mauvés et recreant' - see note 19.

<sup>121</sup> Appendix Three, p. 277, l.15 - p. 278, l.3.

The least that they hope to achieve is to cause Mark to flee in terror; at best they hope Dagenet will be able to bring him as prisoner back to Arthur:

'Sachiez que li chevaliers de Cornoaille tornera en fuie au ferir des esperons tout maintenant qil le verra venir. Miez vient que ensi le feçons, et que il soit torné a desconfiture par Duganet que nos meisions mein en lui.'

Et il s'acordent tuit a ce, et dient qil a trop bien dit, ensic le feront il. Se Duganet puet tant fere que il l'en puisse mener prison en la meson le roi Artus, grant joie en fera Tristan et li rois, ancore plus la cort en sera trop joieuse, et sera de cestui fet biel jeus et bele risee.<sup>122</sup>

Thus we can begin to see how Dagenet's role here differs little from that of the first episode. In both, the intention is clear, and this is reflected in the familiar semantic range of the vocabulary: here, the companions will dress Dagenet in their armour to deceive another knight into combat expecting 'un grant soulaz'; in the first episode the squires did the same 'par gaberie et par envoiseüre'.<sup>123</sup> Here however we have far greater detail concerning the preparation for the combat, and the setting up of the trick. But again the basis is the same. In both episodes Dagenet's own desire to fight the Cornish knights is being exploited.

In the first episode the result was simple. Brunor fought Dagenet, defeated him, yet still humiliated himself and amused the squires who were responsible for the situation. This time, the effect will not be so clear cut. Mark is led by Dinadan to believe that Lancelot is among Dinadan's companions, wearing armour which is actually that which Dagenet is wearing:

Assez vont entre els .ij. parlant de Lancelot, et al derean dit li rois : 'Dites moi, quiels armes porte Lancelot? A coi le poroie conostre se ge le trovoie?' 'Sire, or sachiez qil porte une armes toute noires, et li escu tout noir au serpent blanc. Teles armes aporta. Orendroit je ne vos sauroie mierz enseingnier por quoi vos le pusiez mierz conostre.' Et cez armes qil avoit devisees estoient les armes Mordret qi Duganet le fol porta celui jor.<sup>124</sup>

When Mark is subsequently challenged by this knight in the woods, he takes fright and flees:

<sup>122</sup> Appendix Three, p. 278, ll.4-11.

<sup>123</sup> See note 16.

Atant ez vos dels aprochier Duganet li fol, et qant il voit dels aprochier, il lor crie tant comme il puet : 'Dant chevaliers de Cornoaille, se Dex me saust vos estes mort! Qant vos de mes meins eschaperez, jamés n'en verrez Cornoaille!' Qant li rois ot cele paroule, porce qil cuide que ce soit Lancelot del Lac qi ensinc le va menant, il n'a mie tant de hardement qil l'atende. Ainz torne d'autre part son frein et hurte le cheval des esperons, et s'en vet si grant erre come il puet del cheval trere.<sup>125</sup>

This is the show of cowardice expected by the companions of a Cornish knight. They follow behind Daguenet, who is pursuing his quarry, and shout their encouragement:

Li conpangnon s'en vont après criant et gabant, et font une si grant crie que toute la forest en retentist.<sup>126</sup>

Unfortunately, unlike for the squires in the first episode, the plan begins to go wrong at this point. Instead of catching Mark with a view to taking him prisoner, Mark encounters another knight, who we later discover is Palamedes. Palamedes offers to defend Mark against his pursuers, and does so quite comprehensively, first defeating Daguenet and eventually all of the companions who arrive to defend the honour of their fallen comrades. Thus the joke is turned back on the jokers. However, Mark's honour is still left in some doubt, as Palamedes indicates to Mark's squire when takes his leave while the king sleeps:

Qant Pallamedés le voit endomi, il se fet armer errament et vient a son cheval et monte, puis dit aus escuiers: 'Sengnor, je m'en vois de ci puis que votre sire n'en fet comme chevaliers. Dite li de moie part que je ne vueil plus tenir sa conpangnie ne il ne m'est pas avis au senblant que je ai veu en lui qil ait gramment chevauchié comme chevaliers erranz.'<sup>127</sup>

But the companions are left with only shame, with no hope of avenging themselves as they can not even discover the identity of the victor:

(Agravein): 'Sengnor chevaliers, honiz somes. Nos n'aurons jamés honeur qant cist fet nos est avenuz ne pris, n'en avons aucun vengeance. Malement some avillié certes.' 'Ce est voirs,' ce dient le autre, 'onques mes plus grant desheneur n'avint a tel genz come nos somes ci.' Molt sont dolent et corucié tuit li conpangnon.'<sup>128</sup>

<sup>124</sup> Appendix Three, p. 280, ll.13-18.

<sup>125</sup> Appendix Three, p. 282, ll.11-16.

<sup>126</sup> Appendix Three, p. 283, ll.7-8.

<sup>127</sup> Appendix Three, p. 294, ll.2-6.

<sup>128</sup> Appendix Three, p. 298, ll.10-14.

Their only comfort is in the melodramatic way Duganet reacts to their defeat, from which they gain some amusement:

De cestui fet se plaing Duganet trop fort, car il dit que a poi que li chevaliers ne li a le col ronpu et le braiz. Il breit et crie si durement come se il fust a mort feruz, si que por son crier et por son brere se reconforterent li conpangnon, et s'en rient trop durement. Et ce est une chose qi les esmuet en joie et en soulaz et qui les oste de cel pensé dont lor cuer estoit a maleise.<sup>129</sup>

Here, Duganet becomes a mirror for the feelings of those around him. He shares the anger and pain of his companions after the ordeal they have just suffered, but he is not inhibited in how he displays these emotions. His exaggerated reaction reflects back at the other companions their own pain, but also allows them to step back from it. Duganet's shouting and crying forms a catharsis for his companions, who are then able to forget their own woes. This process is reiterated when Dinadan appears and the whole episode is retold to him. Reliving the incident leaves the companions yet again upset and angry, but once more it is Duganet who alleviates their pain:

Il voit touz les conpangnons si tristes et si corruciez que jamés por senblant n'en furent reconforté se n'en fust Duganet qui ensi se vet plaignant de ce qil avoit esté ensi feruz, qi crie et bret come forsenez et dit qil est feruz permi le cors. Et puis redit qil n'en set en quel endroit il est feruz : or moustre el cors, or mostre son cousté, mes il n'en set mie en quel leu.<sup>130</sup>

Duganet's role in this last episode is a familiar one: he is being used to provoke a situation which will entertain those around him. The author establishes at the beginning that he is familiar with Duganet, and uses references and vocabulary designed to recall in the mind of the reader what we have previously learned of this character. Duganet is being used simply as an instrument: like his companions, he holds the Cornish knights in contempt, but unlike them, he is prepared to fight. This

<sup>129</sup> Appendix Three, p. 298, ll.15-19.

<sup>130</sup> Appendix Three, p. 300, ll.2-6.

fact combines with the shame which seems to attach itself to anyone who takes on Daguenet in combat,<sup>131</sup> to make a perfect weapon to humiliate their enemy, in this case the incognito Mark.

Daguenet performs his role just as he is instructed: dressed as a knight he challenges Mark, then chases him as he flees. After Daguenet has achieved the desired result, unfortunately for the companions, Mark then meets another powerful knight, Palamedes. His defence of Mark causes the shame and humiliation that they intended to bring upon Mark to fall upon themselves. But whilst the ‘grant soulaz’<sup>132</sup> the companions planned for themselves at the start appears to have failed, Daguenet is still able to bring them comfort. His exaggerated reaction to their defeat ‘les esmuet en joie et en soulaz’<sup>133</sup> when they are at their lowest. Thus through changing circumstances, Daguenet is able to maintain his role and bring joy and pleasure to those around him.

Of the three episodes in which Daguenet appears in the prose *Tristan*, it is clear that it is the central one which is of particular importance. There, Daguenet’s *folie* is a prism through which Tristan’s own *folie* is refracted. It is only in direct juxtaposition with Daguenet that we are able to recognise in Tristan the knightly instincts which even his illness and life in the forest have been unable to extinguish. These instincts are embodied in the powerful symbol of the sword which Tristan takes from the unconscious Daguenet. This transference of knightly power marks the first step in Tristan’s journey towards recuperation of his knightly stature.

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<sup>131</sup> As experienced by Brunor.

<sup>132</sup> Appendix Three, p. 277, l.15.

<sup>133</sup> Appendix Three, p. 298, l.18.

Even beyond this face to face meeting, Daguenet has a further part to play in that journey. Returning to Mark's court, he brings tales of the 'fol de la fontaine' which provokes Mark to go in search of him, resulting eventually in Tristan's discovery and cure. Thus Daguenet's role is not only a symbolic one, but also a practical one.

In contrast, the first episode, as we have seen, may at first appear to lack much interest beyond that inherent in the tale of Brunor himself. In the light of the second encounter with Daguenet, however, it becomes clear that the over-emphasis on the description of Daguenet found in the first episode and which seems rather unnecessary for the brevity of the episode itself, is actually laying the foundations for the second encounter. Having already introduced in quite some detail Daguenet to the audience, the author is not required to repeat this explanation at this later point. He exploits the expectations of and familiarity with Daguenet to ensure that nothing detracts from the pivotal meeting with Tristan.

A neat explanation for Daguenet's final appearance is far less forthcoming. His role here has no wider significance than the immediate effect it has on the characters around him. But it does tell us much about the attitude of the author to the character. By the use of vocabulary in the semantic range which has previously accompanied Daguenet, along with other references to his previous appearances, the author demonstrates that Daguenet has become far more than simply another convenient name to draw upon when an extra character is needed. Daguenet is now established in the mind of both author and reader as being associated with certain activities, a certain atmosphere, a certain attitude.

Indeed, it is the attitude towards Daguenet which is a strong theme throughout all the episodes. In each, he is *used* by those around him. His apparently predictable



reactions to certain situations, in particular to being faced with Cornish knights, are exploited for their entertainment value. But there is never any hint that this is being done to the detriment of Daguenet himself- indeed, as Yvain comments, their little plan to trick Mark would please both them and Daguenet - ‘vos en porriez veoir un grant soulaz et aconplir la volonté Duganet.’<sup>134</sup> This consideration for Daguenet is further illustrated when Daguenet is brutally unhorsed by Palamedes. Brandeliz choses to fight this unknown foe to avenge Daguenet as he feels responsible for Daguenet’s plight - ‘si pense que por lor amonestement avoit enprise ceste folie.’<sup>135</sup>

This epitomises the attitude towards Daguenet. *Le fol le roi Artus*, a character easily overlooked, indeed plays a role in the prose *Tristan* which is based in ‘gaberie’ and ‘envoiseüre’, a comic value which is carried over from the prose *Lancelot* and which is present to an extent in each of his appearances in the *Tristan*. Again, however, his involvement is not simply a ‘comic interlude’:<sup>136</sup> here, in his violent encounter with Tristan, we can begin to see the darker side to Daguenet’s *folie* which will dominate his appearances in the final two romances, *Guiron le Courtois* and the *Prophécies de Merlin*. But above all I hope to have shown that the wider implications of Daguenet’s appearances for the prose *Tristan* in general and its hero in particular are unwisely ignored.

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<sup>134</sup> Appendix Three, p. 277, ll. 15-16.

<sup>135</sup> Appendix Three, p. 286, l. 2-3.

<sup>136</sup> See Chapter Two, note 12.

## Chapter Four

### *Daguenet in 'Guiron le Courtois'*

Daguenet's third appearance marks a dramatic development in his literary career. We have already seen how his brief cameo in the prose *Lancelot* led to a far more substantial supporting role in the prose *Tristan*. In the *Guiron*, we find that Daguenet has become the star of an episode which provides him with the one thing he has so far lacked: his own story.

*Guiron le Courtois*<sup>1</sup> follows various knights, including Guiron le Courtois and Hervi de Rivel, through a series of diverse adventures and episodes. Daguenet makes

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<sup>1</sup> As Roger Lathuillère asserts (*Guiron le Courtois: étude de la tradition manuscrite et analyse critique* (Geneva: Droz, 1966), p. 34), *Guiron le Courtois* was probably written around 1235, and certainly post-dates the Grail cycle and the prose *Tristan*:

Postérieur au *Lancelot-Graal* et au *Tristan en prose*, déjà connu au début de 1240, *Guiron le Courtois* n'a pas pu être écrit qu'aux environs de 1235 et rien, quand on le compare aux autres oeuvres littéraires du temps, ne vient infirmer cette date.

Little critical material on this lengthy romance exists, although Löseth did include a brief analysis of the romance in his *Analyse* of the prose *Tristan*. Notable exceptions are a series of articles by Fanni Bogdanow documenting various fragments and manuscripts (see particularly: 'Part III of the Turin Version of *Guiron le Courtois*: a hitherto unknown source of MS. B.N.fr.112', in *Medieval Miscellany presented to Eugène Vinaver*, ed. by F.Whitehead, A.H.Diverres and F.E.Sutcliffe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1965), pp. 45-64; 'A hitherto neglected continuation of the Palamède', *Romance Philology*, 17 (1963-64), 623-32; 'Arthur's war against Meliadus: the middle of Part I of the Palamède', *Revue de Synthèse*, 32 (1964), 176-88; 'The fragments of Part I of the Palamède preserved in the State archives of Modena', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 13 (1969), 27-48); and the excellent and comprehensive analysis of the romance contained in Lathuillère's *Analyse* (see also by Lathuillère: 'Un exemple de l'évolution du roman arthurien en prose dans la deuxième moitié du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', in *Mélanges de langue et littérature françaises du moyen âge offerts à Pierre Jonin* (Aix-en-Provence: CUERMA, 1979), pp. 387-401, and 'L'évolution de la technique narrative dans le roman arthurien en prose au cours de la deuxième moitié du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', in *Études de langue*

his appearance approximately two-thirds of the way through this romance,<sup>2</sup> at a time when Hervi de Rivel is searching in the forest for another companion, the Bon Chevalier Sans Peur. The episode divides itself broadly into four ‘scenes’, linked together by the presence of Hervi de Rivel.

The episode opens with Hervi de Rivel and his squires, who have taken leave of their host of the previous night and have again set off in search of their companion, the Bon Chevalier Sans Peur. Snow lies deeply all around,<sup>3</sup> making riding difficult, but Hervi carries on, lost in thought, and he soon finds himself in the forest:

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*et de littérature françaises offertes à André Lanly*, ed. by Charles Brucker and others (Nancy: Publications Université de Nancy II, 1980), pp. 203-14). Of the thirty-one extant manuscripts and fragments, our episode appears in two, Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal ms. 3325, and Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, R.1622. Arsenal 3325 is one of the oldest surviving manuscripts, dated between 1250 and 1275, and one which Lathuillère rates particularly highly, commenting that it, of all the manuscripts, merited publication (Lathuillère, ‘Un exemple de l’évolution du roman arthurien’, p. 390):

Elle marque une étape dans l’histoire de cette sorte de littérature et reflète assez fidèlement, semble-t-il, les changements intervenus sur certains points dans le domaine des idées et du goût. À ce titre, presque autant que la version commune, elle mériterait d’être éditée.

This wish was fulfilled by one of Lathuillère’s students, Vencelas Bubenicek, who produced an edition of 3325 as a doctoral thesis. It is his text which is used in this study (Venceslas Bubenicek, ‘*Guiron le Courtois: roman en prose du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Paris IV, 1985).

The Turin manuscript is a much later redaction, dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> century (see Lathuillère, *Analyse*, p. 82), and is probably a direct copy from 3325. Bubenicek notes the variants in his edition, which include the addition of a very brief reappearance of Daguenet shortly after the end of the episode which we shall examine (*Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, pp. 347-49). However, this very late addition to the text, which occupies less than one folio, adds little to our understanding of Daguenet or the episode we will be looking at. See Appendix One.

<sup>2</sup> In Lathuillère’s analysis of the *Guiron*, which provides the most comprehensive survey of the contents of the romance, Daguenet appears in §187 of 289 paragraphs (Lathuillère, *Analyse*, pp. 399-400).

<sup>3</sup> The action at this point in the romance occurs in the middle of winter.

La noif est grant q' auques li fet annui au chevauchier, mes por ce ne leisse son oirre, ainz le mantient tant cum il puet. Einsint chevauche cele matinee, la teste enclinee vers terre, cum cil q' pensis estoit: mout li targe q'il ait trouvé celui por q' il se travaille. La ou il chevauchoit en tel guise cum ge vos cont, et il estoit ja entrez en unes brouces mout espesses e si espesses durement q'il ne puet veoir grantment loing de lui, il li avint donc q'il oi un grant cri.<sup>4</sup>

On hearing the cry, Hervi stops to listen and again hears it again. This time he is able to make out words - it is a cry for help: 'Aide, aide, autrement ge sui mort!'<sup>5</sup> - and he resolves to investigate. Because the undergrowth is too thick, he is forced to leave his horse with his squires and take off on foot through the undergrowth:

'Cist est pres de nos q' cest cri a gité. Ore tost descendez e tenez mon cheval, qar ces brouces sunt si espesses qe de ceste part n'i porroie ge mie aler a cheval.' Et il descendent autressint; e leisse illec ses escuiers e dit: 'Atendez moi ici, qar ge reviendrai tost.' E lors se met par mi les brouces a grant paine et a grant travail, qar tant estoient espesses e destroites qe cheval ne s'i peust metre q' outre passast.<sup>6</sup>

Very soon, Hervi arrives at a strange scene by a spring.<sup>7</sup> He discovers a fully armed knight being brutally attacked by a semi-naked man:

Il vit devant une fointeigne un chevalier armé de chaucés e de hauberc, e desus lui estoit un home tout nus, aussint cum il cheï de sa mere, fors qe braies avoit tant seulement; autre robe il n'avoit sor lui ne autre vesteure. Mes coment q'il fust si nuz cum ge vos cont, si tenoit il toutes voies le chevalier armé souz lui, e le tenoit en tel mainiere q'il estoit adenz, e le chevalier estoit navrez.<sup>8</sup>

The knight is being attacked with his own sword, which the attacker is wielding with some force:

Li chevalier q' armez estoit n'avoit point de hyaume en la teste; e li estoit einsint avenu qe li chevalier q' nus estoit li avoit toloite s'espee e la tenoit en sa dextre main e l'en servoit si malemant q'il l'en donoit par mi la teste.<sup>9</sup>

The ease with which the attacker seems to dominate the battle does not surprise Hervi, as his physical superiority is clear. Instead, it is the semi-naked state of the

<sup>4</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §156, ll.16-19.

<sup>5</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §156, ll.30-3, p. 283.

<sup>6</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §157, ll.2-9, p. 283.

<sup>7</sup> As we have seen, the presence of water is a common motif heralding adventure and action. See Chapter Three, note 47.

<sup>8</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §157, ll.10-16, pp. 283-84.

<sup>9</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §157, ll.16-20, p.284.

man which draws Hervi's attention. Hervi marvels that in such cold weather, the attacker should be wearing so few clothes:

Il n'est pas esbahiz de ce que l'ome tient nu le chevalier armé desoz lui, car il est si grant e  
si bien tailliez par grandece de membres q'il puet bien tenir un home desoz lui, mes il est  
esbahiz e merveillanz coment pot avenir qe li homs est nus en tele seison qi si fierement  
est froide qe touz li mondes est engelez.<sup>10</sup>

Is this perhaps a first hint of *folie* – what knight, however strong and capable, would remove most of his clothes and remain virtually unaffected by such freezing conditions? As we have seen, a lack of clothing was certainly a motif closely associated with *folie* in medieval literature, not least for its connection with the tradition of the 'wildman', living amongst beasts as a beast, untroubled by the harsh conditions. During Lancelot's third bout of *folie*, for example, he is in a similar state of undress in very similar weather, and it is by this that Bliant recognises that Lancelot is *fou*.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §158, ll.5-10, p. 284.

<sup>11</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol. 6, CVII, §3, p. 208:

Lors regarde li chevaliers Lancelot qui se combatoit trop merveilleusement a l'escu, si le voit  
si mal atornez, si povrement vestu qu'il set bien qu'il n'alast en nule manniere ainsi, s'il fust  
en son sens, car touz li mondes avoit grant froit et il aloit nuz piez et an chemise et sanz  
cheval, comme s'il fust plains estez.

Both Tristan and Lancelot cast off their clothes in the throes of their *folie*, and a state of semi-nakedness seems to have been closely associated with *folie*, so for the medieval reader, this scene would immediately suggest the presence of *folie*.

The apparent imperviousness of the attacker to the harsh conditions, despite his lack of clothing, also recalls the picture of the *fou* Merlin in the *Vita Merlini*, where he lives as a beast in the forest (*Vita Merlini*, ed. Basil Clarke p. 72, ll.416-18):

Qui nemus ingressus fuerat rituque ferino  
vivebat, paciens concrete frigoris alge  
sub nive sub pluvia sub iniquo flamine venti.

(Merlin had entered the forest and was living an animal life, existing on frozen moss in the snow, in the rain, in the angry blast).

Indeed, this apparent ability to withstand such harsh conditions with so few clothes will become a recurring motif during this episode. As each new character encounters Daguenet for the first time, one of the very earliest things they comment upon is this phenomenon. As we shall see, it will become a visible representation of his *folie*, a sign by which those whom Daguenet meets may initially recognise his *folie* before actually experiencing it. Each time Daguenet's state of undress is described,

The distressed cries of the victim of the attack seem to reinforce this early hint of *folie*. Seeing Hervi, the overpowered knight calls out for his help, telling his potential rescuer that he is being attacked by an *home forsene* who does not know what he is doing:

Ha! sire chevalier, merci! Por Deu e por cortoisie, secorrez moi! ne me leissiez ocirre en tel  
mainiere a cest home forsené q'i a si dou tot perdu le sens q'il ne set q'il fet.<sup>12</sup>

This plea prompts Hervi to attempt twice to help the hapless knight. First, he tries to reason with the attacker, telling him he should not kill a man who is begging him for mercy, but he is ignored and the attack continues. The victim again implores him to intervene, this time reminding Hervi that his honour will be tarnished if he lets him die:

Ha! sire, por Deu, ne me leissiez ocirre en tel mainiere a cest home forsené! E qant vos par  
aventure ici estes venuz, se ge des ore mais i moroie, la honte en seroit vostre e li  
domages miens; por Deu, ne me leissiez ici morir!<sup>13</sup>

With this threat of potential shame ringing in his ears, Hervi again intervenes, this time physically. He manages to wrest the sword from the attacker and it falls into the snow. This valiant attempt is thwarted, however, as the attacker reaches the sword first and regains control of the situation.

Having recaptured the sword, the attacker then takes the opportunity to respond to Hervi's interventions. Just as his apparent victim called on Hervi's chivalric duty to save him, the attacker invokes the same chivalric code on his own

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he is referred to as 'naked, except for his breeches'. When Hervi first sees Daguenet, he is 'un home tout nus, aussint cum il cheï de sa mere, fors qe braies avoit tant seulement' (*Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §157, ll.12-13, p. 283). When Daguenet throws off the dead knight's armour 'il est remés si nus q'il n'a de toute la robe dou monde fors qe braies seulement' (*Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §166, ll.45-46, p. 297). When Hervi describes Daguenet to his squires 'il aloit touz nus, qu'il n'eust sor soi robe nulle dont il se peust covrir, fors qe ses braies' (*Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §167, l.26, p. 299).

<sup>12</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §158, ll.16-18, p. 285.

<sup>13</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §158, ll.28-32, p. 285.

behalf. He complains that Hervi, fully armed as he is, has no right to take on an unarmed opponent:<sup>14</sup>

Sire chevalier, vos me fetes outrages qant si armez cum vos estes, e ge sui dou tout desarmez, e sor tout ce me tolés a venchier moi de mon enem; certes, se vos fussiez bien courtois, ja de nos deus ne vos entremissiez por moi nuire, meesmemant por ce q'il a sor moi tel avantage q'il est de toutes ses armes garniz, e ge sui nus de toutes choses.<sup>15</sup>

So Hervi finds himself in an invidious position. If he is to believe the victim, the attack is being perpetrated by an *home forsene* who will not listen to reason. This argument is apparently supported by what Hervi can see before him: the semi-naked attacker, mercilessly continuing to batter his opponent whilst ignoring Hervi's plea to stop. If the victim is to be believed, his attacker is *fou*, and in no fit state to concede to the victim's pleas for mercy, as dictated by chivalric ethics.<sup>16</sup> If these claims are true, it would surely be Hervi's knightly duty to intervene on behalf of the innocent victim and prevent further injury.

However, the claims of the attacker indicate a completely different scenario. Firstly, he reminds Hervi that it is not right or seemly that a fully armed knight should engage in unequal combat with another who bears no arms himself. Secondly, he claims that Hervi has no right to intervene in a fight which, contrary to

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<sup>14</sup> We have seen the issue of the potential humiliation of unequal combat raised before in both the *Lancelot* and the *Tristan*, see Chapter Three, note 22. Chênerie also notes that one of the four main principles governing knightly combat is 'le combat ne peut avoir lieu contre un adversaire démonté, désarmé, ou blessé' (Chênerie, *Le Chevalier errant*, p. 312).

<sup>15</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §159, ll.10-16, p. 286.

<sup>16</sup> Chênerie notes that it was 'un principe absolu dans l'éthique chevaleresque, la grâce à accorder au vaincu qui la demande, la *merci* qui termine le combat' (Chênerie, *Le Chevalier errant*, p. 318). This is an odd situation, as it is not Hervi, but Daguenet who should be in the position to grant mercy. The implication seems to be that, as Daguenet is apparently acting irrationally, he is in no state to offer mercy, even though knightly honour might demand that he do so. Therefore the responsibility for the life of the victim seems to fall to Hervi, who is the only one in a position to influence the outcome. See also Marie-Luce Chênerie, 'Le motif de la merci dans les romans arthuriens des XIIe et XIIIe siècles: honneur chevaleresque et ressort romanesque', *Le Moyen Âge*, 83 (1977), 5-52.

the claims of the victim, is not a random and motiveless act of a *fou*, but an act of justified revenge upon an enemy. Even the mere fact that Daguenet is able to reason with Hervi verbally and coherently would seem to belie the victim's claim that Daguenet is *fou* at all.

This leaves Hervi in a state of confusion. He turns to the victim and asks why he had not been able to defend himself against his opponent, who, after all, was unarmed. In answer, the hapless knight can only return to his assertion that he has no chance against a man who is out of his senses:

Sire, fet il, se ge defendre ne m'en puis, ce n'est mie trop grant merveille, qar il est trop plus  
fort de moi, e si est home forsenez qi n'a peor de moi ne d'ome mortel.<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately, before Hervi can pursue this debate any further, or even to intervene, the attacker swings his sword and brings it down on the head of his victim, killing him outright.

This sudden and dramatic development distracts Hervi from his enquiries as to the rights and wrongs of the situation. His immediate reaction to the death of the knight is shame at his own inability to save him from this grisly fate:

Quant Hervis de Rivel voit ceste aventure, il est tant irez durement qu'il ne set q'il en doie  
dire, qar il reconoist orendroit en soi meesme qe li chevalier est ocis en son conduit; qar  
puis q'il li croit merci e puis reçut mort, il est oniz e deshonzorez trop malemant.<sup>18</sup>

He is dishonoured by his failure to save a knight who called upon his aid. Under normal circumstances, the dishonour of the death of the knight would lie at the door of the victor who failed to respond to the victim's cries for mercy.<sup>19</sup> However, he also feels unable to avenge himself immediately of this dishonour on the man who caused it, as the victor wears no armour:

<sup>17</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §160, ll.6-8, p. 286.

<sup>18</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §161, ll.1-5, p. 287.

<sup>19</sup> See note 16.



Il ne set q'il doie dire, qar ce voit il bien tout apertement qi cestui qi ci gist mort ne puet il  
des ore mais recovrer, ne en cestui qi ocis l'a ne metroit il main en nulle maineire, por ce qe  
desamez le voit dou tout.<sup>20</sup>

Such unequal combat would also violate chivalric sensibilities, and so Hervi will not lay a hand on his opponent.

But if Hervi was previously unable to distinguish which of the two had been telling the truth, the reaction of the victor to the sight of the dead body of his victim finally decides him. The unarmed man looks for a long time at the dead man, then begins to smile:

Si le comence a rregarder mout vistemment. E qant il a une grant piece regardé, l'espee en  
la main toute nue, qar il ne la velt onques leissier, il se comence a sourire a soi meesme  
trop durement.<sup>21</sup>

For Hervi, the smile is an inappropriate gesture on the part of a man who has apparently randomly killed another. He therefore concludes that the dead knight was right, this man is *fou*:

Si qe Hervis de Rivel qi le regarde e le voit [rire] a soi meesme, dit bien q'il ne puet estre qe  
cist chevalier qi si se rit por veiant, ne soit le plus fol chevalier del monde.<sup>22</sup>

Without evidence to the contrary, it is a conclusion with which the audience is invited to agree – provided with no further elucidation of this act, what other explanation could there be for such satisfaction at such a heinous act? This striking image of the semi-naked man standing over the corpse of a brutally killed victim and smiling remains at the heart of our perception of Daguenet's *folie* throughout the episode. It is Hervi's and the reader's first impression, and it will last.

In fact, for most of the episode the point of view of the reader vis-à-vis the unfolding events coincides with that of Hervi. Whilst Hervi himself does not actually recount the story, it is only what he sees and feels which is related to the reader, and

<sup>20</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §161, ll.5-8, p. 287.

<sup>21</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §161, ll.11-14, p. 287.

<sup>22</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §161, ll.14-17, pp. 287-88.

the reader is thus subtly encouraged to follow his interpretation of events with little or no questions. Both Hervi and the reader enter the scene with no knowledge of what they see, and the shared experience which results generates a bond of identification between them from the very beginning. In this way, the author is able to manipulate directly the interpretation of the story he presents to us, manipulation which will be key to the ultimate impact of his tale.

Until this point in the narrative, Hervi, and therefore the reader, has no idea of the actual identity of the attacker. Hervi's conclusions about him are based only on his own experience and his interpretation of it. When Hervi sees that smile, he decides that the dead knight was telling the truth, that the attack was unjustified and the attacker insane. The reader, who has been given no reason to disagree with this conclusion, is encouraged to concur. And whilst this strange behaviour will be enough to pique Hervi's interest and prompt him to pursue this apparent *fou* through the forest, still in ignorance of his true identity, the author has different plans for the reader.

Under the pretext of agreeing with Hervi, the narrator intervenes in the tale with a digression of his own.<sup>23</sup> This is the one and only point during the episode when the voice of the narrator separates itself from that of Hervi, and the reason soon

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<sup>23</sup> This is an example of what Vinaver called a 'prolongement rétroactif', where the story, instead of following the linear pattern of beginning, middle and end, follows a winding path: 'tel un fleuve qui se perd dans les régions souterraines pour sourdre ailleurs au moment où l'on s'y attend le moins' (Vinaver, *À la recherche d'une poétique médiévale*, (Paris: Nizet, 1970), p. 45). In the case of our episode, the author begins at the chronological end of the story, the attack on the knight, and gradually leads us back, via a series of 'prolongements rétroactifs' - first through this digression into Daguenet's role at Arthur's court, and later through the account of the *vavassor* at the *Chastel Apparrant* - to the chronological beginning. Each 'prolongement' adds to our understanding of the tale until the final revelations complete the circle. See also: Alexandre Micha, 'Sur un procédé de composition de *Lancelot*: les récits rétrospectifs', in *Approches du 'Lancelot en prose'*, ed. by Jean Dufournet (Paris: Champion, 1984), pp. 7-23, (repr. in Micha, *Essais*, pp. 129-42).

becomes clear. This is not just any strange *fou* whom we have just witnessed in victory, but a very particular character with whom the discerning reader will be familiar from previous appearances, and upon which familiarity the author wishes to draw. To this end, the narrator announces, as if to confirm Hervi's conclusion, that the semi-naked man is Daguenet le Fol:

E sainz faille chevalier estoit il assez prouz et assés hardis. E se auquns me demandoit coment il avoit a no, ge diroie tout plainement qe ce estoit Danguenet le fol.<sup>24</sup>

But, if the attentive reader recognises the name, he certainly does not recognise the initial description given by the narrator. Far from the *fou* knight whom we encountered in the prose *Lancelot* and the prose *Tristan*, Daguenet is portrayed as once having been one of the best knights in the kingdom:

Il fu primes chevalier qu[i] estoit biez sainz fale uns des plus sages chevaliers qi fust en tout le roiaume de Logres; en qel qe leu qe aventure l'eust aporté dusq'a celui tenz le tenoient si compeignon, e li privé e li estrange, por le plus sage chevalier de toutes choses qi fust entr'els por ce qe jamés ne pooien veoir en lui aucune folie q'il feist; e sor tout ce estoit li chevalier de grant force e preuz e hardiz estrangement.<sup>25</sup>

This marks a significant departure from Daguenet's previous appearances. In neither the *Tristan* nor the *Lancelot* is to be found any reference to Daguenet ever having been such an accomplished knight, and in fact, no reference has ever been made to a history, a life before *folie*, or even to the fact that there was a time when Daguenet was not *fou*. This is the author's first indication of one of the purposes in this episode: to develop Daguenet, who had until now played only two dimensional bit parts in other peoples' stories, into a fully rounded character of his own.

Whilst the notion that Daguenet was once a great knight is new to the reader, it is certainly not a new idea that a great knight could lose his mind, as both *Tristan* and *Lancelot* had done. And whilst it is difficult to reconcile a picture of the 'plus fol

<sup>24</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §161, ll.19-22, p. 288.

<sup>25</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §161, ll.22-29, p. 288.

chevalier del monde’ as identified by Hervi with this superlative description of knighthood we have just been given, it is difficult to deny that the ease with which Daguenet defeated his opponent at least showed some evidence that he was once ‘de grant force e preuz e hardiz estrangement’. But it must also be remarked that even in his praise of Daguenet, in this episode, the narrator shows some reservation. ‘Estrangement’ is a strange word to use, perhaps introducing an element of mystery, perhaps hinting that there is more to the story than meets the eye, hinting perhaps at a connection with the supernatural. In fact, it is a word which will recur frequently in connection with Daguenet, a constant reminder of an elusive sense that there is something missing from our understanding of this character.<sup>26</sup>

In fact, the description of Daguenet’s illustrious past is very reminiscent of the description of Daguenet in the *Lancelot*:

Chil Daguenés estoit chevaliers sans faille, mais il estoit fols naïs et la plus coarde pieche  
de car que l'en seust: si se jouoient de lui un et autre por les grans folies qu'il faisoit et qu'il  
disoit, qu'il aloit aventures querant et disoit au revenir qu'il avoit ochis .I. chevalier ou .II. ou  
.III..<sup>27</sup>

Each begins with the positive assertion that Daguenet is definitely a knight – ‘sainz faille’. But here the agreement ceases, and the *Guiron* paints a picture of a Daguenet who is the reverse of the Daguenet of the *Lancelot*. Instead of ‘fols naïs’, Daguenet is ‘uns des plus sages chevaliers qi fust en tout le roiaume de Logres’; instead of ‘la plus coarde pieche de car’, he is ‘chevalier de grant force e preuz e hardiz’; instead of entertaining all and sundry with his ‘folies’, the narrator of the *Guiron* tells us that ‘jamés ne pooien veoir en lui aucune folie q’il feist’. The author has taken Daguenet as described in the *Lancelot* and turned him on his head to place him amongst the

<sup>26</sup> This sense will, of course, be confirmed when we finally learn the identity of the dead knight, and that some of the assumptions we had made about Daguenet and his actions were wrong.

<sup>27</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §8, p. 446.

ranks of the great heroes to whom, until now, he has played only a very minor supporting role.

Having established Daguenet's previous knightly credentials, the narrator rapidly moves forward to the present state of affairs, Daguenet's *folie*:

Mes se il dusq'a celui terme avoit esté tenuz por le plus sage dou monde, ore estoit il apelez por le plus fol del monde; e ce ne fu mie merveille, car il ne feisoit se folles non e forseneries. Il n'ot plus sens d'une beste forsenee, e por ce fu il apelez des lor en avant Daguenet le fol. Illec tout droitemant encomencierent ses folies.<sup>28</sup>

His fall from grace is emphasised by the direct contrast between the two superlatives: no longer 'le plus sage dou monde', Daguenet is instead the precise opposite, 'le plus fol del monde'. Here again we find echoes of earlier portrayals of *folie*, particularly the comparison to the 'beste forsenee', recalling the same description which was made of Tristan in his *folie*, and forming a link back to the literary tradition of the wild man.<sup>29</sup>

But the significance of this passage lies more in what is not said than what is actually described. This narrator who seems to know so much about Daguenet omits to answer the one question which is immediately raised by his account: why did Daguenet become *fou*? The contrast between the superlatives of the description of his previous status and this description of his present state points to some cataclysmic event as having precipitated such a reversal in fortunes. Was Daguenet, like Lancelot and Tristan, pushed over the brink of insanity by the loss of his lady? Or was there something even worse behind his downfall?

But before returning to the story at hand, the narrator firmly establishes that, despite the new elements he has introduced to our knowledge of him, Daguenet is an

<sup>28</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §161, ll.29-34, p. 288.

<sup>29</sup> This comparison of the madman as beast recalls the tradition of the wild man (see Chapter One, pp. 44 ff.). Although it has not been used previously to describe Daguenet, 'beste forsenee' was used to describe Tristan's state of *folie* (*Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §168, l.7, p. 248).

habitué of Arthur's court, and this provides the link which identifies him as the same *fol le roi Artus* whom we have previously met, and who has appeared sporadically as an incidental character in other earlier prose romances. He begins by explaining that even in his *folie*, Daguenet still loves Arthur's court as much as he did when he had his senses:

E si avoit dou tout amé la meison deu roi Artus tant cum il fu en son sens et en sa bonté; e  
por ce ne l'ama il mie mainz tant cum il fu en sa folie, ainz l'ama tant q'il en leissa toutes  
autres masons por cele e touz autres repaires.<sup>30</sup>

This love for the king ties in with the later assertion that the only thing which will calm Daguenet is the mention of King Arthur.<sup>31</sup> It also places Daguenet firmly in the environment with which he is associated in the earlier romances. Even though Daguenet is not referred to in the *Guiron* as *le fol le roi Artus* as he is in both the *Lancelot* and the *Tristan*, by placing him so firmly in the heart of King Arthur's court, the author is confirming that this can only be the same character.

As well as placing him in a familiar environment, the narrator's account of Daguenet's behaviour at court links him to the role of *fou de cour* with which he has previously been associated, and in which role he amused those around him with his *folies*. We are told of one particular occasion when, having heard so many knights return to court with numerous tales of the adventures involving Tristan, Daguenet concludes that it cannot all be the work of a single man. Therefore, there must be several knights called Tristan:

Dont il fu seu tout certainement dedenz la cité de Camahalot qe qant l'en comença  
premierebant a parler del bon Tristain et il oï quant li chevaliers en disoient si grant bien e  
qe nus ne venoit a cort qi de li aportast nouveles, il qida tout veraïement qe plusors  
Tristains fussent por ce qe tantes paroles ça venoient a celui pont.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §161, ll.37-41, p. 288-89.

<sup>31</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §182, ll.23-32, pp. 316-17: 'Mes seulement por remembrance de li demore il en pes une grant piece; ce veom nos de li tout adés avenir: tout maintenant qe nos li aventivom le roi le roi Artus se paixe e se refrene son mal talent' (ll.29-32).

<sup>32</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §161, ll.44-49, p. 289.

Curiosity to meet one of these wonderful knights prompts Daguenet to reveal this belief to Arthur when he asks how he could go about finding such a Tristan:

Por Deu, biaux sire, qar me dites de ces Tristains ou en porroie ge trouver l'un. Se ge l'un d'aus tant seulement peusse trouver e veoir, ge qideroie tout maintenant por celui conoistre de qel pris sunt tuit li autre Tristain.<sup>33</sup>

Arthur reacts to this bizarre request with amused tolerance. Smiling, he questions him gently, then suggests he go to the court of Mark in Cornwall. Neither Arthur nor any others present demonstrate any scorn or derision at Daguenet's apparently bizarre request. Here as elsewhere, there seems to be an attitude of benign indulgence towards him, as those around him gently exploit his follies for their own amusement:

Quant li rois Artus entendi la demande de Daguenet, il se comense a sourire a soi meesmes e dit: 'Coment, messire Daguenet, avez vos si grant volenté de veoir l'un de ces Tristains?' 'Oïl, sire,' dist il, 'sainz faille. Jamés ne serai a repos devant qe ge voie l'un d'eaus, qar trop en font estrange parlemant tuit cil qui en vostre ostel sunt ne veignent. E por ce le voill ge veoir; nes puis, a tout le meins en verrai ge l'un.' 'Daguenet,' fet li rois Artus, 'se vos l'un des Tristainz volez veoir, alez en la meiz[on] le roi Marc de Cornoaille; et en la meison le roi Marc sainz faille porroiz l'un des Tristainz trouver.'<sup>34</sup>

When he arrives in Cornwall, Daguenet is greeted with a similar attitude. He is recognised by the many knights from Arthur's court who are also there, and who seem to be aware of his nature. They rejoice at his arrival:

Qant il virent Daguenet, il firent trop grant joie e trop grant feste, qar tuit le conoissent a ce qe pou venoient chevaliers errant en la meison le roi Artus q' ne le veissent.<sup>35</sup>

Daguenet's reputation is clearly widespread, and when he expresses the wish to meet a 'Tristan', he is eagerly introduced to him. Daguenet concedes that indeed Tristan appears to be a great knight, and concludes from this evidence that this must also be true in the case of the other Tristans. But that is not the comment which causes

<sup>33</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §161, ll.54-58, p. 289.

<sup>34</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §162, ll.1-10, p. 289-290.

<sup>35</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §162, ll.28-31, p. 291.

amusement in his audience. Not only does he repeat his strange belief in plural Tristans, but he now appears compares them unfavourably with Lancelot:

'En non Deu, se tuit li autres Tristainz sunt autressint biaux cum est cestui et il ressemblent si bien proudome cum cestui, il ressemblent bien vaillant homes. Mes certes, tout aille l'en grant bien disant, de cestui si ne croi ge mie q'il soit si bon chevalier cum estoit celui qe ge pris oan par force d'armes;' e ce estoit de monseignor Lancelot del Lac dont il parloit. E cil qi cestui conte savoient, comencierent a rrire.<sup>36</sup>

The incident Daguenet is referring to here is clearly his encounter with Lancelot in the prose *Lancelot*, when he was able take him prisoner while the latter was under the influence of a love-trance. Again, the narrator clearly expects that his audience will be familiar with Daguenet's earlier appearance, and plays on this expectation. In the light of the earlier romance, the discerning reader will be particularly amused by the way Daguenet recalls the incident for his Cornish audience. By claiming to have caught Lancelot 'par force d'armes' he is suggesting his own superiority over Lancelot. He then asserts that Lancelot is superior to Tristan - effectively implying that he, Daguenet, is superior to both. The truth of the incident is of course that Daguenet needed no arms to capture Lancelot. At the time, Lancelot was under the influence of a trance which rendered him unfit to defend himself against anyone, and was caused great humiliation when taken prisoner by Daguenet. It is this truth behind Daguenet's claims which causes his audience to laugh.

Thus we can see that Daguenet's relationship to the court and those around him is that of toleration and amusement akin to the 'soulas' and 'envoiseüre' of earlier episodes.<sup>37</sup> His foolish actions *per se* amuse those around him, but such people are not averse to manipulating him for further amusement, as when Arthur

<sup>36</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §162, ll.36-43, p. 291.

<sup>37</sup> See Chapter Three, note 16 and p. 107.



encourages Daguenet to follow his belief in the ‘Tristans’ to Cornwall. Whilst there seems to be this element of mockery, it is playful rather than malicious.

It might seem that the semi-naked wild man figure who has just killed a fully armed knight has very little in common with this simple *fou de cour* just described. This of course is not the case. As we have seen, the interpolated description of Daguenet as a *fou de cour* is a development of earlier portrayals of the same character. So too the account of him as a wild man figure standing semi-naked over his victim has its roots in those same earlier accounts. In the *Tristan*, Daguenet is seen to be both the frenzied attacker when he sets upon the shepherds in the wood, and the *fou de cour* when he returns to Mark’s court to warn them of the ‘fol de la fontaine’.<sup>38</sup> When Daguenet encounters the *fou* Tristan in the woods,<sup>39</sup> Daguenet, dressed in full armour, is seen to launch a vicious and disproportionate attack upon the unarmed shepherds with whom Tristan had been living, and who are unable to defend themselves against him. According to Daguenet’s victim in the *Guiron*, Daguenet has perpetrated just such a crime here, an unprovoked attack upon a knight unable to match him in combat. In the *Tristan*, Daguenet then goes on to resume the role of fool when he returns to Mark’s court to warn them of Tristan, a role akin to that which the author of the *Guiron* has just described. It is the same two sides of Daguenet which co-existed in the *Tristan* which we now see portrayed in the *Guiron*.

Whilst this confirms that the capacity for both extremes of behaviour already existed in Daguenet, his portrayal in the *Guiron* is not simply a reproduction of the *Tristan* incident. In many ways, Daguenet’s role in this episode owes more to the role played by Tristan in the earlier episode. Both Daguenet in the *Guiron* and

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<sup>38</sup> Chapter Three, pp. 117 ff.

<sup>39</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §169, pp. 248-50.

Tristan in the prose *Tristan* are described as ‘forsené’.<sup>40</sup> Both characters are semi-naked. Daguenet wears only ‘braies’.<sup>41</sup> We are told that when Tristan became *fou*, he began to ‘desrompre les dras k’il avoit vestu’.<sup>42</sup> Both possess extreme bodily strength. Hervi is not surprised that Daguenet is able to keep hold of his captive because ‘il est si grant e si bien tailliez par grandece de membres q’il puet bien tenir un home desoz lui’.<sup>43</sup> Tristan is able to throw Daguenet to the ground ‘ausi legierement com se ce fust uns enfes’.<sup>44</sup> And in both cases, it is a sword captured from their opponent which is the weapon with which Tristan and now Daguenet gain their ultimate victory.<sup>45</sup>

Thus this lengthy digression reaches its conclusion, and the narrative perspective shifts from the apparently omniscient narrator back to the limits of the experience of Hervi himself. We return, however, ‘not to precisely what we have left but to something we understand differently because of what we have seen since.’<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §158, l.18, p. 285: Daguenet’s victim calls on Hervi to save him from ‘cest home forsené’. In the prose *Tristan*, Tristan is described as tearing his clothes off ‘com uns forsenés’ (*Tristan*, ed. Ménard, §168, i, l.5, p. 247).

<sup>41</sup> See above, note 11.

<sup>42</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §168, ll.4-5, p. 247.

<sup>43</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §158, l.6-8, p. 284.

<sup>44</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §170, ll.21-22, p. 250.

<sup>45</sup> As it is becoming clear, there are many resonances and parallels in this episode with both Daguenet’s previous appearances and the *folies* of both Lancelot and Tristan. As Vinaver notes, this manipulation of pre-existing material was integral to the art of the mediaeval author: ‘in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, more perhaps than at any other time in the history of narrative art, the measure of artistry was the ability not to invent new stories, but to build up sequences out of the existing ones. The aim was not “creation”, in our sense, but re-creation - the elaboration and transmission of inherited material’ (Vinaver, *The Rise of Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 54).

<sup>46</sup> Rosamund Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery: Some Medieval Books and their Posterity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 363. This is an example of *entrelacement*, a technique first described by Ferdinand Lot in his excellent study *Étude sur le Lancelot en prose*, Chapter 2, ‘Du

The digression, while it does not inform us about the precise nature of the fight we have just witnessed, does arouse in the reader a curiosity to find out more. We know now that this is not just any *fou*, but a character we have encountered before. We also know that the author has not simply reproduced Daguenet as we have seen him before, but is building around him something new - an illustrious past. What further innovations lie in store?<sup>47</sup> But most important is the deliberate omission which will become the focus for our attention - the story of how and why Daguenet succumbed to *folie*.

The tale now returns to the scene in the woods, where Daguenet's victim lies dead in the snow. Daguenet wastes no time in taking the dead knight's armour and clothing himself in it. Once he has done this, he turns to Hervi and offers himself in

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principe de l'entrelacement', pp. 17-28. Tuve gives a useful overview of this technique of interwoven narrative strands (Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery*, p. 363):

But events connected by entrelacement are not juxtaposed; they are interlaced, and when we get back to our first character he is not where we left him as we finished his episode, but in the place of a psychological state or condition of meaningfulness to which he has been pulled by the events occurring in the following episodes written about someone else. Moreover, though the intervening episode will look like a digression from the line previously followed, it will transpire that that line could not go on without something furnished in the seemingly unrelated second line of narrative, the 'digression'. Or, if the digression has rather the character of a flashback or an elaboration or a supplying of a background, it will turn out to carry onward some second 'new' theme as well as the first one which needed the background; and from that in turn we digress, or seem to, and then come back, not to precisely what we left but to something we understand differently because of what we have seen since.

Although our particular episode is not subject to the multiple layers of narrative to which Tuve alludes, the principle behind the technique of *entrelacement* as she describes it still applies. For further discussion of *entrelacement*, see also particularly Kennedy, *Lancelot and the Grail*, pp. 161-201; Micha, *Essais*, pp. 94-107.

<sup>47</sup> As Fritz notes ('Daguenet, ou le bouffon amoureux', pp. 50-51), this is a reflection of the tendency of *Guiron le Courtois* to seek to provide a context, a 'prologue' for the characters found in other Arthurian romances: 'C'est là une tendance que l'on observerait pour l'ensemble du roman [*Guiron le Courtois*], qui met en scène les pères des héros: Lac, père d'Erec; Méliadus, père de Tristan; le Bon Chevalier, père de Brunor et de Dinadan; Escalbor, père de Palamède. Ce glissement vers la

combat. He reasons that although Hervi would not fight him before because he was not armed, now that he is, they both have the chance to prove who is the superior knight:

'Sire chevalier, armez sui orendroit; qant ge estoie tout nus, vos veniez si asprement sor moi cum ge sai, mes ore qant ge sui armez, por qoi ne m'assalliez vos a cestui point aussint cum vos feissiez devant? E se vos volez, certes, ge sui dou tout apareliez qe ge me combate encontre vos por esprouver se ge sui auques meillor de vos ou se vos estez meillor des armes qe ge ne sui.'<sup>48</sup>

Hervi replies that he will not fight him, as the shame Daguenet has caused him by killing the knight and Hervi's own failure to save him is too great. This does not make sense to Daguenet, who then points out that if he had caused Hervi so much humiliation, then surely he should fight to avenge himself. However, Hervi again refuses:

'E qant ge vos ai vergoignié si malemant cum vos dites,' fet Daguenet, 'coment est ce qe vos ne fetes vostre pooir de revanchier vostre honte?' ' Por ce, fet Hervi de Rivel, qe ge a vos ne me combatroie mie volantiers.'<sup>49</sup>

Daguenet listens with apparent comprehension to what Hervi has to say and gives him the chance to fulfil any demands he may feel he has to redeem his honour. Hervi, however, declines, telling Daguenet that he will never willingly fight against him, a response which is rather strange. Redeeming his honour must surely be a priority, and his refusal can perhaps only be understood in the context of an unequal battle: Daguenet is almost naked and apparently *fou*, and it would cause further shame on Hervi to take on such an opponent.<sup>50</sup>

Daguenet then leaves without forcing a fight, saying:

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génération précédente se réalise pour Daguenet par un retour non vers le père, qui n'est jamais évoqué, mais vers son 'avant-folie', sur qui a donné naissance à sa folie'.

<sup>48</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §163, ll.7-13, p. 293.

<sup>49</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §164, ll.10-15, p. 293-294.

<sup>50</sup> See Ménard, *Le Rire et le sourire*, p. 306 (see Chapter Three, note 22). The ambiguous nature of Hervi's obligation to honour - whether to fight or not - is further illustrated by the fact that he eventually changes his mind and agrees to the battle.

'Qant vos a moi ne vos volez combatre,' fet Daguenet, 'e ge vos en quit; ja force ne vos en ferai.'<sup>51</sup>

With this, he takes off again into the woods on foot.

This apparently rational and sober response is a little puzzling in the light of Hervi's experience so far. Following the recent incident, it would not seem unreasonable to expect that Daguenet would now turn on Hervi in the same way, especially now that he too is armed. That he does not do so perhaps adds to that elusive feeling that there is more to Daguenet than the initial impression had implied, a suggestion which will continue to grow as the episode goes on.

Daguenet's departure marks the close of the first scene. Hervi, minus squires and horse, has witnessed a fight which he believes to have been an unprovoked fatal attack by a semi-naked *fou* on an innocent, yet fully armed, knight. Whilst Hervi is still unaware of the attacker's identity, the reader has been party to a narratorial excursus in which we have learnt that the attacker is Daguenet le fol, a knight of previously excellent reputation, who lost his mind but remained at court and whose simple-minded antics cause amusement to those around him. Daguenet, who began the episode clothed only in breeches and armed only with the sword of his opponent, now leaves the area of the spring on foot, now clad in the dead knight's armour.

Hervi still does not recognise Daguenet, and curiosity compels him to follow him through the woods to a derelict house, the setting for the second scene of the episode. Once again the reader shares in Hervi's experience directly, as the narratorial voice limits itself to what it sees and feels, but for the reader, the motivation to find out more about Daguenet is now greater than mild curiosity.

In the ruins of the derelict house, Daguenet finds a superb horse and a brand new shield and dagger:

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<sup>51</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §164, ll.14-15, p. 294.

Leianz avoit un destrier bel e riche e grant e fort, et un escu auques nouvel. L'escu estoit auques nouvel, l'escu estoit tout noir [a] une bende toute vermeille auques estroite. E delez l'escu avoit un gleive cort e gros et a fer trenchant; bien estoit li glaives proprement cum de chevalier errant.<sup>52</sup>

The superlative description of each item underlines their significance as symbols of knightly prowess – ‘cum de chevalier errant’. These are knightly accoutrements fit for the finest of knights, and a reminder for the audience of the recently acquired knowledge that Daguenet was once one of those finest. Taking up the shield and knife, and climbing onto the horse, Daguenet’s transformation from wild man to knight is now complete. No longer the semi-naked *fou* we met at the beginning of the tale, Daguenet, in appearance at least, is the picture of a fine knight errant. This image of Daguenet clad as a knight is familiar to us from both the *Tristan* and the *Lancelot*.

This newly found knightly identity seems to give Daguenet the confidence to renew his challenge against Hervi, this time with much greater force:

‘Certes, dan chevalier, vos estez mort se vos ne vos poez defendre encontre moi; vostre mort vos est trop procheine.’<sup>53</sup>

The tables have now turned completely. Instead of Hervi refusing to fight Daguenet because the latter was unarmed, Hervi now has little choice but to respond to the challenge of the same knight, who is now better equipped than himself. Daguenet is now on horseback, Hervi still on foot. Hervi agrees to the combat, and Daguenet prepares, lining up his horse to charge at his opponent.

At that moment, however, Daguenet is caught up in his own thoughts:

E qant il s'est bien esloigniez le cors d'un cheval et il devoit encomencier son cors, lors s'areste il ausint cum s'il vouxist comencer a penser ausint a cheval cum il estoit, e comença a penser si estrangement qe vos ne verroiz home penser einsint cum il pensoit adonc. Qant Hervis de Rivel voit qe Daguenet a encomencié som penser, il li crie tant cum

<sup>52</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §164, ll.21-26, p. 294.

<sup>53</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §164, ll.31-33, p. 294.

il puet: 'Coment, sire chevalier, n'en feroiz vos plus? Avez vos eu peor de moi por ce qe ge  
sui a pié?'<sup>54</sup>

With his exaggerated repetition of 'penser' the author is clearly impressing on our minds in another theme which is familiar from our previous encounters with Daguenet. This time it is not Tristan's but Lancelot's love-*folie* which is being recalled. The great hero's experience with Daguenet began in a very similar manner. He too was deep in thought when Daguenet came upon him by the river:

N'ot gaires alé quant il encontre Daguenet le Fol qui li demande ou il vait et il pense, si ne  
dist rien. Et Daguenés dist: 'Je vos preng.'<sup>55</sup>

As we have seen, Lancelot is caught several times in the course of the prose *Lancelot* by such deep thoughts and trances, often at highly inappropriate moments, and usually inspired by the sight of the woman he loved.<sup>56</sup> It appears that Daguenet is perhaps also somehow afflicted in a similar way.

It is also interesting to note the recurrence of 'estrangement' in association with Daguenet. It first appeared in the description of Daguenet's previous knightly prowess: 'de grant force e preuz e hardiz estrangement'.<sup>57</sup> Here, it is used to describe the thought process which distracts him from his attack on Hervi, adding to the air of strangeness and mystery which is being built around Daguenet.

<sup>54</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §166, ll.2-9, pp. 295-96.

<sup>55</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §7, p. 445.

<sup>56</sup> The contrast seems to be being made here with the irrational madman who operates on a wholly instinctive level, responding directly to stimuli with no pause for thought. This is illustrated, for example, by both Tristan and Daguenet in their encounter in the prose *Tristan* (see Chapter Three). This interruption by thought also recalls Lancelot's tendency to be easily distracted by thoughts of his love, an instance of which, of course, led to his capture by Daguenet (see Chapter Two). On Lancelot and his trances, see Kennedy, 'Royal broodings and lover's trances'. On the subject of medieval theories of thought and imagination, see: Murray Wright Bundy, *The Theory of Imagination in Classical and Medieval Thought*, University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, 12 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1927), esp. pp. 177-98; E.Ruth Harvey, *The Inward Wits: Psychological Theory in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, Warburg Institute Surveys, 6 (London: Warburg Institute, 1975).

<sup>57</sup> See note 25.

But what could be the object of this contemplation? Until now, we have been told nothing which could account for this trance-like state, and certainly nothing comparable to Lancelot's dilemma. But it seems that love too is responsible for Daguenet's incapacity. Hervi waits patiently while Daguenet is paralysed by his thoughts, ignoring Hervi and striking a stereotypically love-lorn pose – 'la teste...enclinee vers terre'.<sup>58</sup> Then, letting out a deep sigh, Daguenet declares his agony at the top of his voice:

'Ha! las,' fet il, 'cum ge sui honiz! Por qoi demore tant la mort qi ne me prent? De celi point qe ge perdi par mon pechié la bele qe ge tant amoie ne deusse ge vivre un seul jor. Las qe feray? Las qe diray? Honis sui, destruis sui, mors sui! [E] qant ge sui einsint onis qe ge ai perdu men cuer e m'amie, qe vois ge demorant une hore qe ge ne mori a mes mains, por qoi demor? Ge demor enqore por ce qe ge vois enqore atendant qe ge puisse cele trouver qe ge perdi par ma defaute.'<sup>59</sup>

This melodramatic outburst of distress demonstrates to the audience and most importantly to Hervi that it is indeed love which finds itself at the root of this distress, and more immediately, this momentary incapacity. We learn that it is not only love, but the loss of his lady love that is the cause of his distress.

<sup>58</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §166, l.22, p. 296.

<sup>59</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §166, ll.24-32, pp. 296-97. The use of the word *pechié* here is a little problematic. In her article on the use of this word in Béroul's *Tristan* (Janet Hillier Caulkins, 'The meaning of *Pechié* in the *Romance of Tristan* by Béroul', *Romance Notes*, 13 (1972), 545-49) Caulkins comments: 'The tendency to equate *pechié* with the modern French word *péché* is natural, but should often be avoided' (p. 545). She points out that the medieval word covered a semantic range which included the amoral 'misfortune', 'outrage' and 'ill luck' (pp. 546-47) as well as the moral judgement of sin. This is reflected in Tobler-Lommatzsch, which apart from the expected 'Sünde', provides the following interpretations of 'pechié': 'Unrecht, Frevel; Schuld, Veranlassung; Unglück, Mißgeschick' (Tobler-Lommatzsch, vii, pp. 529-34) a semantic range which has been preserved in the modern German word *Pech*. Godefroy appears to have ignored this ambiguity of meaning, and provides no modern equivalents.

In the context of what we later learn about how Daguenet lost his lady, 'pechié' here seems to have the sense of 'misfortune'. Until that explanation is given, the author seems to be playing on the ambiguity as to whether it was Daguenet's own fault or sin which caused his sorry position, or whether he was the victim of ill fortune.



But this tantalising insight into Daguenet's mind, to which the author draws our particular attention with his impressive use of rhetorical devices such as declamation, rhetorical questions, and hyperbole, still does not tell us the whole story. It is yet another allusion to an incident as yet unidentified, but which looms ever larger in the awareness of the audience - the events surrounding the loss of Daguenet's sanity. These events have already been brought to our attention by their omission from the narrator's account of Daguenet's history, where the transition from great knight to *fou* is presented but not explained,<sup>60</sup> and now Daguenet himself hints at their dramatic nature. The author skilfully piles up these puzzles, maintaining the interest of his reader with the hint of the ultimate revelation.<sup>61</sup>

Thus again we can see how the story which the author of the *Guiron* has created for Daguenet reflects closely not only the Daguenet with which we are familiar from the *Lancelot* and the *Tristan*, but also incorporates aspects of the other knights with whom he appeared with totally new elements. The trance-like state is clearly a reference to Lancelot's similar lapses. But the externalisation of the emotional turmoil found in his sudden outburst of emotion is not found in either Tristan's or Lancelot's story. It is an example of the self-awareness which sets Daguenet in his *folie* apart from these predecessors.

The effort of this emotional outburst seems to drain Daguenet of his energy, for he now descends once more into a silent contemplation:

E qant il a dit ceste parole, il comence adonc a penser aussint fort cum il fesoit devant. E qant il a pensé une grant piece, si maz e si pensis q'il ne disoit nul mot dou monde, il ne fet

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<sup>60</sup> See above, pp. 147-148.

<sup>61</sup> Lathuillère identifies this manipulation of the expectations of his audience as a particular feature of the skill of the author of 3325: 'Ainsi se fait une révélation progressive des aventures courues par les principaux personnages et, grâce à d'incessants retours en arrière, des élucidations soigneusement retardées viennent reprendre et compléter les premières relations laissées en suspens' (Roger Lathuillère, 'L'évolution de la technique narrative dans le roman arthurien en prose', pp. 211-12).

onques autre chose, ainz descendi del cheval e li oste le frain de la teste e la sele  
autressint.<sup>62</sup>

Again we have the excessive repetition of the theme of the thought, reflecting the internal conflict Daguenet is suffering.

When Daguenet's attention returns to the events at hand, he has forgotten the challenge on Hervi. Instead, he throws off all the knightly arms and armour he had been wearing, and lets his horse go. It seems he has not so much returned to his senses, but regressed to the stage at which we first met him, wearing only his breeches and running barefoot through the snow:

E qant il est remés si nus q'il n'a de toute la robe dou monde fors que ses braies  
seulemant, il comence a corre par desus la noif tant cum il puet toutes voies avant q'il ne  
regarde ne ça ne la, ne a destre ne a senestre.<sup>63</sup>

He has cast off all the trappings of knighthood and civilisation and returned to a near wild state. Donning the armour and mounting the horse has rekindled the memories of his loss, and he cannot cope with facing it any more. Rejecting the armour, he rejects the memories and returns to a wilder, more ignorant state.

Daguenet now runs off again, barefoot, into the forest. Although Hervi follows, he soon loses him, and the pair are separated. At this point, Daguenet leaves both Hervi and the reader behind, as the narratorial perspective will remain firmly focussed on Hervi as he struggles to catch up with him.

But before we move onto the location of the third scene, we must return to Hervi, who has not finished at the derelict house. Once he has lost sight of Daguenet, Hervi turns back to fetch his squires and his horse. Bringing them back to the derelict house, he explains to them only the fact that he had experienced an extraordinary adventure in the woods, without giving them any of the details:

<sup>62</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §166, ll.32-36, p. 297.

<sup>63</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §166, ll.45-48, p. 297.

'Ceste demore qe ge ai tant fete ne fu mie sainz achoison: une aventure qi bien est la plus merveilleuse qe ge veisse en toute ma vie si m'a tant detenuz.'<sup>64</sup>

Thus when they all arrive at the spot where Daguenet had shed his armour, the reactions of the squires to what they see before them are uninfluenced by any tale Hervi might have told them. The first things they notice are the footprints in the snow. Seeing that they are of bare feet, their first reaction mirrors exactly Hervi's own reaction when he first saw Daguenet standing over his victim. Then, Hervi was 'esbahiz e merveillanz'<sup>65</sup> that Daguenet could survive nearly naked in the cold and snow. Now, the first reaction of the squires is the same:

'Sire, ce dient li vallet a lor seignor, ci devant vet un home a pié tout freschemant; enqore ne puet il mie estre loing de ci. Et est une merveille, sire, ce sachez vos tout de voir, qar il est touz nus piez e sainz souliers; merveille est q'il n'est mort de froit en ceste noif qui tant est grantz.'<sup>66</sup>

Their wonder is that Daguenet should be barefoot in the snow because the only evidence they have is the footprints before them. Hervi knows that it is not just Daguenet's feet which are bare, and plays up to their shock and surprise, gradually revealing to them the true state of Daguenet's attire:

'Coment, fet il, seignor escuier, si vos merveilliez de ce q'il vet a pié par ceste noif?' 'Sire,' dient il, 'voirement nos en merveillom nos.' 'Ore,' fet il, 'ne tendriez vos a plus grant merveille s'il aloit touz nus, qu'il n'eust sor soi robe nulle dont il se peust covrir, fors que ses braies?' 'Sire,' dient li escuier, 'ce ne porroit estre, a nostre av[i]s, q'en si froide seison cum est ceste peust nul home aler si nuz come vos dites.'<sup>67</sup>

The author uses repetition to reiterate strongly the theme at hand, the survival in the snow of the semi-naked Daguenet. He uses the new characters – the squires - to reintroduce the idea and to recall Hervi's own first reaction. The succession of references to 'merveille' is accompanied by a similar number for references to 'nus' and 'froid', combining to highlight the theme in the strongest of terms to the reader,

<sup>64</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §167, ll.6-9, p. 298.

<sup>65</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §158, l.8, p. 284.

<sup>66</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §167, ll.16-20, p. 298.

and providing a strong link back to the first scene, where Hervi's reaction was described in similar terms.

Just as Hervi seemed to consider Daguenet's semi-nakedness evidence of the latter's *folie*, so he again links the two as he further explains the situation to the squires:

'Seignors,' fet Herys de Rivel, 'ore sachiez tout veraïement qe celui qi vet devant nos e qi fist ces pas qe vos veez ici si est nus piez cum vos dites, e si nus en toutes mainieres q'il est dou tout descouvert, fors qe de braies seulement. E ge di bien en moi meesmes q'il ne puet estre en nulle guise q'il n'ait le sens perdu; e si est chevalier sainz faille. Ore nos hastom de chevauchier auqun pou por savoir se nos le porrom ataindre, qar trop savroie volantiers en toutes guises qui il est e coment il perdi le sens e par qele hachaison.'<sup>68</sup>

With these words, Hervi finally signals the end of this scene, and he leads the group in search of Daguenet and the reasons for his *folie*. His closing speech summarises Hervi's experience so far. Because he does not yet know the true identity of the *fou* nor the reason for his *folie*, the conclusions he reaches are based only on the evidence of his own eyes. At the end of the first scene, the fight he had witnessed and the claims of the victim before he died had convinced Hervi that Daguenet was simply a *fou*. The subsequent experience of challenge and honourable behaviour towards him, alongside the glimpse into an inner turmoil, have led Hervi to revise his opinion. This is not just a *fou*, but a knight who has for some reason lost his senses, and Hervi would like to know why. His motivation has increased from mere curiosity as to what Daguenet would do next to wanting to know why Daguenet behaves as he does, a desire already inspired in the reader by the narrator's earlier digression.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>67</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §167, ll.22-28, pp. 298-97.

<sup>68</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §167, ll.31-39, p. 299.

<sup>69</sup> Again, the author is demonstrating the art described by Lathuillère in the way he skilfully and gradually builds the wider picture of Daguenet. See note 61.

However, the third scene fails to fulfil this hope. Hervi and his squires do not catch up with Daguenet. Instead, they follow Daguenet's footprints to the edge of a river where they meet another knight. He is injured, and calls to Hervi to help him. Hervi dismounts and finds that the knight has a bad gash from a knife in his stomach. Hervi asks him how he got such an injury, and the injured knight replies that he had been attacked by another strange knight who wished to cross the river. The injured knight had advised him not to, as the river was deep and dangerous, but received this injury for his effort.

The injured knight's description of his attacker makes him immediately identifiable as Daguenet. We have the now familiar motif of the coldness of the weather and the lack of clothes on Daguenet as the injured knight describes how he and his squire first noticed Daguenet:

E la ou nos parliom entre nos de la saison qi estoit tant froide e nos regardiom ceste rivere  
e disiom tout apertement qe nos ne porriom passer, se ce n'estoit par auqun pont, qar trop  
est l'aigue parfonde e fort en toutes mainieres, atant e vos vers nos venir de cele part dont  
vos venez un home nu, fors qe de braies, e crioit tant cum il pooit crier.<sup>70</sup>

The reference to his breeches which has accompanied each description of Daguenet's semi-nakedness confirms the identification.<sup>71</sup> For the injured knight, these lead to a diagnosis of *folie*. When he realises that it is not from the cold that Daguenet was screaming and shouting, he concludes that the man running towards him must be *fou*:

Qant ge le vi vers nos venir en tel mainiere, ge fui trop fierement esbahiz coment ce pot  
avenir q'il n'estoit mort de froit, e qidai adonc sanz doute q'il criast por la froidure e non por  
autre chose; mes non fesoit, ançois crioit cum ci qi estoit enragiez e fors dou sens.<sup>72</sup>

Seeing that Daguenet was about to launch himself into the river, the knight tries to stop him. He calls for Daguenet to stop:

<sup>70</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §170, ll.10-16, p. 301.

<sup>71</sup> See note 11.

'Fui, foll ne te met dedenz le flum, qar tu es morz se tu t'i mez!'<sup>73</sup>

This seems to halt Daguenet briefly, but it is not the warning about the river which catches his attention. It is the accusation of his *folie* which provokes a reply from him. He demonstrates again that he is aware of his own *folie* and its causes:

Qant il entendi qe ge aloie einsint criant, il se torna adonc devers moi e me dist: 'Se ge sui fol, ce fist amor; ge ne puis nul autre blasmer de ma *folie* fors qe amors tant soulemant.'<sup>74</sup>

In the second scene, Daguenet had also proclaimed that it was love which was causing him anguish: here he reiterates that it is indeed love which has actually caused his *folie*.

His first declaration had sparked a kind of rage in him in which he had thrown off all the armour he had so recently put on, and then fled barefoot into the forest. This time, the declaration that love is the cause for his *folie* seems to provoke an even more violent outburst. Daguenet finds the knife which belongs to the knight at the river, takes it in both hands, and stabs the hapless knight:

Quant il ot dite ceste parole, il regarda tout entor lui, et avint adonc par mon pechié q'il vit mon glaive drecié a un arbre, illec devant. Il n'i fist nulle autre demore, puis q'il ot le glaive, ainz corrut tout errament e prist le glaive a deus mains; e la ou ge estote en estant e regardoie q'il voloit faire, il s'en vint a moi tout le cors e me feri, si cum il est enqore aparant.<sup>75</sup>

Having done this, he jumps into the river and crosses it with ease - 'aussint legieremant come se rienz ne li fust'<sup>76</sup> - and disappears. Unable to cross the river, the now injured knight and his squire are helpless to follow him.

Hearing this story from the injured knight prompts Hervi to repeat his belief that Daguenet must have been a great knight before he became *fou*. But now his

<sup>72</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §170, ll.16-20, pp. 301-02.

<sup>73</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §170, ll.23-24, p. 302.

<sup>74</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §170, ll.24-27, p. 302.

<sup>75</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §171, ll.1-6, p. 302.

<sup>76</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §171, ll.8-9, p. 302.

desire to find out why this happened to Daguenet has developed further into a desire to help him:

'S'il est forsenez, ne remaint q'il n'ait esté chevalier de grant afaire; e por ce meisse ge trop voluntiers conseil en sa maladie, se ge faire le peusse, qar au moisne feroit ccortoisie grant qi donroit aide a un tel home cum cestui.'<sup>77</sup>

This is the first time that Daguenet's *folie* has been referred to as an illness which might respond to attention. His *folie* is no longer the seemingly permanent state of before, but has been given a beginning point and the possibility of an end point.<sup>78</sup>

Surprisingly, it is not just Hervi who has sympathy with Daguenet. The injured knight also recognises something in Daguenet which sets him apart as a knight and provokes his pity, despite the wound he has incurred:

'Certes,' fet li chevalier navrez, 'vos dites cortoisie e gentilece, e croi bien q'il ait esté chevalier de haute proece garniz; por ce feriez vos bien se vos metiez conseil en sa dolor, se metre li poez.'<sup>79</sup>

Daguenet's admission that love is the cause of his unfortunate situation seems to resonate with both Hervi and the injured knight, provoking their sympathy and encouraging Hervi to continue his search, not only to fulfil his own curiosity, but now with the aim of practical help.

In this scene, the physical distance between Daguenet and Hervi is reflected in the narratorial relationship formed with the injured knight. Just as Hervi is physically separated from his quarry, so we are separated from him narratorially by the extra narratorial layer through which Daguenet's actions are relayed to us via the third person. This extra perspective also entails a further level of interpretation of Daguenet's actions, through which the author is able to influence the interpretation of the reader, and of which the influence is particularly noticeable here. Looked at

<sup>77</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §172, ll.10-14, p. 303.

<sup>78</sup> This is the first indication of a transition from *fou de cour* to *fou malade*. For further discussion of *folie* as an illness, see Chapter One, pp. 24 ff.

<sup>79</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §172, ll.14-17, p. 303.

objectively, the events described are violent and unjustifiable. Daguenet attacked the knight who is now injured merely because he was warned not to cross the river because it was dangerous. But the injured knight himself, who has every right to be angry, instead expresses sympathy for Daguenet. If the victim is capable of such magnanimity, then surely the reader has no right to condemn Daguenet? It is now not just Hervi, but a third party with independent experience of the *fou* knight who agree that Daguenet is in need of, and deserves, any help they can offer him.

Hervi thus resolves to continue his quest to find Daguenet. Much to the consternation of his squires, he decides that they too will cross the river at this point. In spite of the injured knight's protestations, Hervi jumps into the river and seems to get across fairly easily:

Cil ne respont a parole qe dit li chevalier navrez, ainz se met el flum toutes voies. E ce li donoit si grant seurte de passer le sauvemant q'il sentoit q'il estoit montez sor un grant destrer, fort e bon e isnel; e por ce li avint il si bien q'il passa le flum tout a nou.<sup>80</sup>

His horse seems to be big and strong enough to carry him safely. However, just as it seems the warnings were unfounded, Hervi hits the river bank and it requires all his effort to continue out of the water:

Mes avant qu'il fust outre, but il de l'eve assez plus qu'il ne vouxist. E q'en diroie? toutes voies passa il outre a grant paine et a grant travail; et a grant aventure a esté de morir a cestui passage.<sup>81</sup>

Hervi's squires follow him across, and they soon find the traces of Daguenet that they sought. Vowing to catch up with him on the same day, Hervi leads his squires again into the woods in pursuit of Daguenet, leaving the river behind them and moving onwards to the fourth and final scene.

<sup>80</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §173, ll.10-14, p. 304.

<sup>81</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §173, ll.14-18, p. 304.



The fourth scene opens with Hervi and his squires arriving at the Chastel Apparant. Despite riding as hard as they could all day they have been unable to catch up with Daguenet, a fact which is a source of some surprise to them:

Et adés lor avient einssint q'il troevent les pas de Daguenet dont il se merveillent trop  
estrangement: coment ce puet avenir q'il est tant venus a pié ne enqore ne l'ont ataint?  
Einsint chevauchent tout adés après lui au plus esforcieement q'il poeent, qar toutes voies  
le qident ataindre.<sup>82</sup>

Spotting a castle in the distance, Hervi suggests that they take refuge there for the night, and sends a squire ahead to find them lodgings.

Upon the return of the squire to the group, they enter the castle together and are greeted with cries of 'Gardez vos del fol! Gardez vos del fol!'<sup>83</sup> from within the castle. Hervi stops, convinced that the *fou* they are being warned about is their quarry, Daguenet. This is soon confirmed as Daguenet appears in front of them, flanked by crowds of people. He is still almost naked, and throws stones at anyone within range of him:

Aprés ce q'il fu arrestez, il n'ot pas demoré granment q'il voiet venir Daguenet, tout  
contreval la mestre rue, si nus come hui le virent au matin. Après lui venoient grant gent:  
veillarz homes e geunes enfanz; li uns fugent devant lui e li autre venoient après. Et il tenoit  
entre ses mainz pierres plusors q'il gitoit amont et aval a ceaus qi estoient plus pres de  
lui.<sup>84</sup>

But even in this apparent frenzy, Daguenet recognises a fellow knight when he sees Hervi:

E qant il voit Hervis de Rivel, tout fust il foux et enragiés, si conoist il tout certainement qe  
ce est un chevalier errant; e por ce li vet il au devant, si nus cum il estoit, e li di: 'Bien  
viignant, sire chevalier errant!'<sup>85</sup>

His exclamation is, in the circumstances, quite incongruous with Daguenet's appearance and behaviour, and is a dramatic reminder of Daguenet's own previous

<sup>82</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §174, ll.6-11, p. 305.

<sup>83</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §175, l.19, p. 306.

<sup>84</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §176, ll.1-7, p. 307.

<sup>85</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §176, ll.7-10, p. 307.

knightly stature. It appears that, like Tristan, even in the midst of his *folie*, Daguenet retains some knightly instincts as he recognises in Hervi one of his own kind.<sup>86</sup>

In this way, Hervi and his squires finally catch up with Daguenet. Whilst this meeting is only brief, almost fleeting in nature, it allows Hervi to see Daguenet in a new context. Out of the woods, in amongst the inhabitants of the castle, this is the *fou* in the midst of civilisation.

This scene within the walls of the castle recalls a similar scene in the *Lancelot*, but with significant differences. During the third and longest period of *folie* that Lancelot suffers, he eventually returns to Corbenic.<sup>87</sup> Upon entering the castle, he is pelted with mud by the children of the castle and chased until he seeks refuge at the palace, where he is fed and allowed to stay. In the *Guiron*, it is Daguenet who is throwing stones in an apparently unprovoked manner at the crowd around him. Nor is there any sense in which Daguenet is being chased by the crowd. They surround him, both in front and behind him - ‘li uns fugent devant lui e li autre venoient après’ - and thus they cannot be chasing him away. He is in their midst, a part of them. Further to that, we are clearly told that the crowd contains the most vulnerable members of the community - ‘veillarz homes e geunes enfanz’ - demonstrating that for the inhabitants of this castle, Daguenet poses no serious threat.

This unexpectedly benign attitude towards the *fou* is explained by the host who provides Hervi and his squires with lodging for the night. Hervi, who is still unaware of the true identity of the knight he has been following for so long, enquires if the host knows him. The host replies that he knows this *fou* well, although at first he does not mention Daguenet’s name. He explains that the knight they have been

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<sup>86</sup> In the prose *Tristan*, Tristan, although clearly *fou*, instinctively defends the shepherds against the disproportionate attack launched by Daguenet and his squires. See Chapter Three, pp. 111 ff.

<sup>87</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.6, CVII, §22, p. 219.

following was once a great knight until he lost his senses. This confirms the conclusion to which Hervi had already been led by his experiences, that Daguenet must have a chivalric background:

Enqore n'a pas grantment de tenz qe ge le vi biau chevalier e mignot, e preuz des armes  
durement e si garni de toutes bontez de chevalerie, cum chevalier porroit ore avoir en soi,  
si qe a paine trovast l'en en cest païs un plus proudome de lui.<sup>88</sup>

Perhaps the most striking feature of this conversation is the sympathy which the host expresses with Daguenet's plight. He rues the loss of Daguenet's knightly prowess:

'Ge le conois bien. De celui vos sai ge bien a dire qe ce est damage e perte grant e trop  
dolereuse de ce q'il est einssint mescheoit q'il a dou tout perdu le sens cum vos veez.<sup>89</sup>

It soon becomes clear that the host speaks not only for himself but for all inhabitants of the castle. He speaks not only of his own sympathy, but of the collective efforts of the castle dwellers to try and restore Daguenet to health. He moves from speaking of his own thoughts - 'ge' - to describing the collective efforts to help Daguenet:

'E certes, qant ceste grant mescheance li avint, en eussom nos fet aucune chose se nos le  
peussom fere; nos le volumes prendre, n'a enqore pas granment, por fere dormir e  
reposer en aucun leu, por savoir se par dormir ou par reposer li peust sa maladie  
trespasser.<sup>90</sup>

For the second time, Daguenet's *folie* is being described as an illness, by both Hervi and the host. As an illness, rather than a permanent state, the possibility exists that Daguenet could be cured. The people of the Chastel Apparant have done all they could to try and effect such a cure.<sup>91</sup>

However, such efforts to get near Daguenet have now ceased. The enormous strength which seems to be a particular feature of his *folie* has cost more than one life

<sup>88</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §176, ll.20-24, p. 308.

<sup>89</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §176, ll.17-19, pp. 307-08.

<sup>90</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §176, ll.30-34, p. 308.

<sup>91</sup> This seems to reflect the sympathetic response of the community to the *fou* that we saw in Chapter One, pp. 33-34.

within the castle, and there seems to be no-one who is strong enough to capture him. Yet again, *estrangement* is used to describe the powers he seems to have gained in his *folie*:

'Il est si estrangement fort qe nul home ne le puet prendre as bras q'il ne le giete contre terre errament; en cest chastel ou nos somes orendroit a il maint chevalier ocis qi le voloient prendre.'<sup>92</sup>

Now, he is tolerated and cared for as best they can.

Far from satisfying our curiosity and that of Hervi, what the host has to say only adds fuel to that fire. We now know for certain that Hervi's earlier judgement that Daguenet must once have been a great knight is true. It is because of this previously excellent reputation that the castle's inhabitants have taken so much trouble to care for him in his state of *folie*. This only underlines the one question which was raised at the very beginning of the episode, and which the host has still not answered - how did Daguenet fall from such a high status and plunge so low?

Hervi presses the host to tell exactly who the knight is and how he came to be *fou*. Agreeing, the host embarks upon the story which will bring together and make sense of all that we have so far learnt about Daguenet - his true identity and the ultimate source of his misery.

The story begins with a common knightly pursuit, a tournament, which took place at the Chastel Apparant:

'Sire, enqore n'a pas deus anz entiers qe devant cest chastel ot un tournoiemant mout grant e mout bel.'<sup>93</sup>

Many knights attended this tournament just to see a beautiful daughter of the lord of the castle - we never learn the actual name of either father or daughter. Amongst the visitors were two friends, Daguenet and Helior de l'Espine. Both were 'biaux

<sup>92</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §176, ll.35-39, p. 308.

<sup>93</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §178, ll.1-2, p. 309.

chevaliers'<sup>94</sup>, but Daguenet was from Arthur's court, and Helior was not. Indeed, Daguenet had already gained himself an excellent reputation:

Helior de l'Espine n'estoit pas de la meison le roi Artus, mes Daguenet en estoit e tant avoit  
ja fet par la proece q'il estoit de grant renomee, et en celui hostel et en autre leu.<sup>95</sup>

Their excellent performances at the tournament, particularly that of Daguenet, confirmed these reputations and caused quite a stir amongst their audience:

Qant Daguenet fu venus au tornoiemant entre lui e celi suen compeignon, il le firent adonc  
andui si bien q'il conquistrent a celui point grant pris e grant loux. E tant firent qe cil de cest  
chastel en tindrent grant parole, qar ill avoient veu en ambedeus proeces merveilleuses.<sup>96</sup>

Having both fallen in love with the beautiful damsel, the daughter of the lord of the castle who had caught the eye of so many of the knights, Daguenet and Helior remain once the tournament is over in order to see more of her. One day, they hear that her father has been accused of treason by a knight at King Pellinor's court:

Un pou après fu li pere de la damoisele apelez de traïson en la cort le roi Pelinor, de cui  
honor cist chastiaux est. Li peres de la damoisele n'avoit pas en lui si grant bonté de  
chevalerie q'il peust son cors defendre par sa proece soulemant encontre qi l'apeloit.<sup>97</sup>

Hearing that the accused is unable to defend himself in armed combat, Daguenet steps forward to offer himself as his champion:

E qant il entendi qe si peres estoit apelez de traïson, e par tel chevalier encontre cui il ne se  
porroit mie defendre, se par autrui n'estoit, il vint a lui tout droitement e li dist voiant nos  
touz de cest chastel: 'Sire, ne soiez esmaiez de ceste bataille dont vos estes apelez, qe ge  
sui touz appareilliez qe ge l'enpreigne sor moi e qe ge me combate por vostre amor  
encontre celui qui apelé vos a.'<sup>98</sup>

He goes to Pellinor's court and kills the knight who made the accusation. On his way home, Daguenet receives word that a brother whom he has not seen for a long time is at Arthur's court, and so he makes a detour to see him. It is not until a year later that he finally returns to the Chastel Apparant.

<sup>94</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §178, ll.17, p. 310.

<sup>95</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §178, ll.18-21, p. 310.

<sup>96</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §178, ll.21-25, p. 310.

<sup>97</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §179, ll.3-7, p. 311.

<sup>98</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §179, ll.15-21, pp. 311-12.

His return to the castle is greeted with much jubilation. Daguenet has proved himself both honourable in taking on the challenge on behalf of their lord, and an excellent knight in winning the combat and redeeming the lord's honour. He is now clearly in the role of great knight, as the events described provide evidence for the narrator's earlier assertion that Daguenet was once 'sainz fale uns des plus sages chevaliers qi fust en tout le roiaume de Logres'.<sup>99</sup> From violent *fou*, Daguenet is gradually transforming into the hero of his own story, and the audience begins to sense the advent of the explanation which they have been waiting for.

Within days he requests and is granted the hand in marriage of the beautiful damsel whose father he had saved. Naturally, the lord of the castle is happy to oblige:

De ceste nouvelle fu li sires de ceianz mout liez e mout joianz durement qant il le sot, e nos autres en fumes tuit liez, qar bien saviom certainement qe cil estoit tel chevalier qe bien plus gentil damoisele qe n'estoit la nostre e mieiz vaillant se tenist a bien paiee d'avoir tel mari.<sup>100</sup>

It is once the happy deed has been performed, and Daguenet and his companions leave for their own lands, that disaster strikes. Upon the road, the group, which includes Daguenet's new wife and his friend Helior de l'Espine, meets another knight. This new character takes a particular liking to Daguenet's beautiful wife. He challenges Daguenet to fight for her, and the fight is long and bloody, lasting all day – 'des hore de none dusq'a la nuit obscure.'<sup>101</sup>

During this fight in which Daguenet seeks to defend his wife and her honour, his supposed friend and companion, Helior, seizes the chance to take for himself the women over whom the others fight. He informs the lady that it would be best if they rode on ahead in safety, away from the *mêlée*:

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<sup>99</sup> See note 25.

<sup>100</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §180, ll.13-17, p. 313.

<sup>101</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §181, ll.15-16, p. 314.

'Chevauchom avant, qar ge ai doute qe greignor gent ne viegnent après cest chevalier qi prendre vos vouissent a force; e puis qe nos serom a cest chastel ça devant, nos n'avrom garde ne de cestui chevalier ne d'autre.' Par ceste decevance en mena le chevalier la damoisele en sa compeignie, qar ele qidoit tout de verité q'il la menast a sauveté por Daguenet.<sup>102</sup>

Instead of taking her to safety, Helior betrays his friend and takes Daguenet's wife away with him to Cornwall:

Mes cil pensoit tout autremant: il leissa ilec les deus escuiers Daguenet, e les suens deus en mena; e qant il dut torner au chastel ou il avoit pramis, il torna adonc autre part, qar il s'en ala en Cornoaille. Et il fu bien un an entier avant qe nos le seussom. Einsint fu trahiz e deceuz vileinemant Daguenet par son compeignon; einsint perdi il sa moillier par celui q'il tant amoit et en cui il se fioit si duremant.<sup>103</sup>

After the battle is over, Daguenet goes in search of his wife, but is not able to find her. He searches day and night for two months, at which point he returns to the Chastel Apparant, hoping to find news of her there. When there is no news, he takes ill, and after more than a year of illness, loses his mind and has remained in this state until the present:

E qant il fu entre nos venuz et il vit q'il ne porroit oïr nulles nouveles de ce q'il aloit qerant, il enprist si grant duel sor lui q'il acoucha malades. E li endura cele maladie bien un an entier e plus enquore q'il onques ne pot garir; et au derain perdi il del tout le sens q'il ne savoit q'il fesoit ne plus q'un enfant de deus anz.<sup>104</sup>

So it is finally revealed that the trauma which precipitated Daguenet's illness was a double one. Not only did he lose the lady he loved, but he lost her through the calculated betrayal of a knight whom he counted as his best friend.

Having brought Hervi up to date with Daguenet's story, the host adds two further interesting pieces of information. Firstly, he explains how since Daguenet lost his mind, he has wandered far and wide, but always returns to the Chastel Apparant:

Mes coment q'il aille loing, il retorne a nos toutes voies; plus demore adés en nostre compeignie q'il ne fet en null autre leu.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>102</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §181, ll.22-27, p. 315.

<sup>103</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §181, ll.27-34, p. 315.

<sup>104</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §182, ll.12-17, p. 316.

<sup>105</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §182, ll.21-23, p. 316.

The journey Hervi has just undertaken supports this assertion. As soon as Daguenet had killed the knight at the beginning of the episode, he took off into the woods and eventually found his way back to the Chastel Apparant. He was not simply running away from the scene of a crime, but purposefully returning to the castle where he had been made to feel welcome, and which had been the home of his beloved wife.

Secondly, the host reveals that, although they could find no permanent cure for Daguenet's *folie*, there was one method that the people of the castle could employ to calm him for a while. However frenzied his behaviour, Daguenet always responds positively to any mention of King Arthur:

Se nos li disom auqueune fois: 'Veez ci venir le roi Artus!' il s'aresta tout maintenant e regarde  
tout entor soi e dit adés: 'Gabez sui, ce n'est mie mon chier seignor.' Mes seulemant por  
remembrance de li demore il en pes une grant piece.<sup>106</sup>

It is perhaps the reminder of his happy and successful time as a knight at Arthur's court which provokes such a reaction in the unhappy Daguenet.

Hervi is glad at last to have got to the bottom of the history of the mysterious knight he had been following. Picking up on the fact that Daguenet is calmed by the mention of Arthur, he remarks that Arthur will be glad to have news of Daguenet, although the nature of that news will distress the king :

'E sachiez qe de ces nouveles ne sera mie li rois Artus trop joianz qant il le savra, ainz en  
sera bien corrouciez, qar il l'amoit de grant amor.'<sup>107</sup>

Now that Hervi knows Daguenet's name, he seems to be able to recognise him from Arthur's court, and thus again can confirm Daguenet's attachment there. He even goes on to suggest that King Arthur could provide a possible cure for Daguenet. If the mention of Arthur's name is enough to calm him, perhaps a visit to court would cure him completely:

<sup>106</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §182, ll.26-30, p. 316.

<sup>107</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §182, ll.40-42, p. 317.



'E certes, puis q'il tant aime le roi Artus cum vos me fetes entendant, e meesmemant en ceste forsenerie ou il est orendroit, ge croi qe, qui le merroit au roi Artus, q'il avroit si grant joie q'il garroit tout maintenant de cele forsenerie ou il est orendroit.'<sup>108</sup>

And so Hervi would seem to have fulfilled his little quest. He knows why and how Daguenet lost his mind, and has even been able to offer some advice on how he might be helped. Indeed, Hervi is satisfied that he has heard it all, and his questions cease. The death of the knight which had first caused Hervi to conclude that Daguenet was *fou* and triggered the interest which has led us this far, seems to have been forgotten amidst the revelations about the cause of Daguenet's *folie*. The episode could easily have ended here, and the fight would have been dismissed by the reader as a negative symptom of Daguenet's *folie*.

Later the same evening, however, Hervi shows how much this incident has played on his mind. Hervi's arrival at the Chastel Apparant and the explanation of Daguenet's story had prompted much reminiscing there on the subject of Daguenet's antics:

Einssint tindrent celui soir grant parlemant des folies Daguenet.<sup>109</sup>

But amidst this light-hearted banter, Hervi makes his own contribution to this discussion, displaying his anger at what he had seen Daguenet do earlier that day:

Hervis de Rivel, qi mout en este orendroit corrouciez, conte a son hoste ce q'il en avoit le jor veu: coment il avoit mis a mort le chevalier armé e coment il s'en estoit puis partiz.<sup>110</sup>

Nothing Hervi, and therefore the reader, has seen during the time following the fight has removed the sour taste that this unpleasant incident has left behind. Despite all the sympathy and positive attitudes displayed by everyone who has had anything to do with Daguenet, the fact remains that he committed a violent and unprovoked murder on a fellow knight.

<sup>108</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §182, ll.42-47, p. 317.

<sup>109</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §183, ll.1-2, p. 317.

<sup>110</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §183, ll.2-5, p. 317.

It is only when the host asks Hervi to describe the shield that the dead knight bore that the final piece is placed in the jigsaw. The revelation he is about to make will again shift the focus of the episode. Until now, this has been a tragic story of a knight who lost his mind when he lost his lady, a tale which is not unfamiliar to the reader of medieval romance. What sets Daguenet's tale apart from earlier portrayals is the misery caused by the manner in which he lost his lady - through the treachery of his best friend.

It is this which finally becomes clear with the host's revelation. Recognising the description of the shield, he identifies the dead knight as Helior de l'Espine, the best friend who had betrayed Daguenet with his wife:

'Ha! sire,' fet li vavasor, 'la beste est prise! Ore sachiez veraïement q'il a hui ocis, si fui celui chevalier demeine qi la damoisele li embla, tout einssint cum ge vos ai conté. Puis q'il a cestui ocis, bien li a rendu toute la traïson e toute la fellenie q'il li fist ja.'<sup>111</sup>

The choice of metaphor which the host employs in his exclamation of joy is particularly interesting. Firstly, it firmly indicates where the sympathies of the host lie. To this man, Daguenet is a great knight fallen on difficult times, for which Helior de l'Espine, through his treacherous betrayal of his best friend, is responsible. In the host's eyes, these actions reduce Helior to a sub-human level, a dangerous beast whom Daguenet had every right to hunt down and kill.

At the same time, the exclamation could also refer to events on a wider level. On an immediate level, the beast is indeed Helior, the elusive quarry for whom Daguenet had been searching for so long. On a wider level, the metaphor could also refer to the elusive nature of this final revelation. Just as Daguenet had been on the trail of Helior, the audience has been on the trail of the truth behind Daguenet's *folie*. With the identification of Daguenet's opponent in the opening fight, we finally have the elusive key to understanding the whole episode.

Lastly, the metaphor also forms a rather neat chiasmus with the beginning of the whole episode, where Daguenet, like Tristan before him, was described as having no more sense than ‘une beste forsenee’.<sup>112</sup> His semi-naked appearance and the unexplained attack on Helior seemed to confirm this diagnosis. Gradually, however, the truth behind the events has been revealed, to the point where now that original conclusion is shown to be wrong: just as the host suggests, it is Helior, not Daguenet, who is the *beste*.

This knowledge transforms the motiveless attack into a justified act of revenge, in which Daguenet had the right to challenge the knight who betrayed him. It bears out Daguenet’s own claims for justification, and proves that things are not always how they seem. The truth was hidden behind a paradox. Hervi was perhaps inclined to believe the dead knight’s story because he, dressed in his armour, looked the part of an honourable knight. Daguenet on the other hand lacked the outward appearance of such a knight, yet has now been proved to be the more honourable of the two. Ultimately, it is proved that such appearances can be deceptive. Helior has betrayed his friend and his knighthood, and shown himself unworthy of his chivalric status. Daguenet is the victim who, despite the handicaps of lack of armour and even of his senses, has demonstrated incredible knightly prowess against all the odds.<sup>113</sup>

This prowess and knightly potential is summed up by the concluding words of the host. Having heard the full account of the adventures Hervi had witnessed whilst following Daguenet, the host voices what must be in the minds of all those present:

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<sup>111</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §183, ll.9-13, p. 318.

<sup>112</sup> See note 28.

<sup>113</sup> Again, this recalls the paradoxical situation in which Tristan and Daguenet find themselves in the prose *Tristan*, where Daguenet bore the trappings of knighthood, yet behaved disproportionately towards the shepherds, and Tristan, devoid of any outward signs of knighthood, behaved honourably in defending the shepherds (see Chapter Three, pp. 109 ff.).

if Daguenet can achieve these marvels whilst *fou*, of what would he be capable with the aid of his right senses?

'En non Deu,' fet li vavasor, 'cestui fet ne fu mie petite merveille qe vos me contez, mes trop grant! E qant il en sa forsenerie mena si grant chose a fin cum est ceste, ge croi bien q'i les menast assez greignors s'il fust en sa droite reison et en son droit senz.'<sup>114</sup>

On this high point, the episode leaves Daguenet and his adventures as Hervi returns to his mission to find his companion the Chevalier Sans Peur.

Thus in coming to the end of the tale, the author returns us to where we started, inviting a reappraisal of all that we have seen of Daguenet here, but also in the prose *Lancelot* and the prose *Tristan*, in light of the identity of the dead knight. Daguenet, whose previous appearances have amounted to briefly important, informative and entertaining yet still only supporting roles, is now recast as the star of his own story, the story of his *folie*.<sup>115</sup> But, although his story may seem familiar - a great knight

<sup>114</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §183, ll.17-21, p. 318.

<sup>115</sup> In fact, the whole Daguenet episode fits the definition of a *nouvelle* (novella) as proposed by R. Dubuis in his study of that genre: 'Une nouvelle est le récit, le plus souvent bref, d'une aventure, en générale récente et présentée comme réelle, qui intéresse par son caractère inattendu' (Roger Dubuis, *Les Cent Nouvelles nouvelles et la tradition de la nouvelle en France au moyen âge*, (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1973), p.126). Whilst the *nouvelle* as an independent genre did not emerge fully until the fifteenth century, Vinaver shows how its roots can be traced back to the cyclic prose romances (*The Rise of Romance*, p. 95):

Long before the French *nouvelle* reached the status which it was to enjoy in the fifteenth century, self-contained stories began to occur within the framework of certain cycles. Even though these stories often remained embedded in voluminous cyclic manuscripts, they were to all intents and purposes the natural prototypes of the *nouvelle*, characterized by the singleness of the theme and the simplicity of the narrative design.

Bubenicek notes that the author of 3325 uses this technique to maintain narrative interest: 'l'intérêt est renouvelé par des récits qui sont de véritables nouvelles' (*Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, v, p. 92), and Lathuillère identifies this technique as another area in which the author of 3325 demonstrates his skill: 'ces récits dans le roman, au second degré pourrait-on dire, prêtés aux personnages, font apparaître une grande virtuosité' (Lathuillère, 'L'évolution de la technique narrative dans le roman arthurien en prose', p. 211). On the *nouvelle*, see also Janet M. Ferrier, *Forerunners of the French Novel: an Essay on the Development of the 'Nouvelle' in the late Middle Ages* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1954).

losing his mind following the loss of his lady - the author of the *Guiron* introduces a new factor: the effect on Daguenet of the betrayal by his companion.

In many ways, it would seem that Daguenet is simply following in a strong tradition - Yvain, Tristan, Lancelot all lost their minds for the love of a lady.<sup>116</sup> There is little doubt that love has played a major part in causing Daguenet's *folie*. Aside from the evidence of the host knight who tells the whole of Daguenet's sad story, we have the evidence of Daguenet's own words. Twice he intimates that love is at the root of his problems. The first time, in the wake of his long and silent contemplation just as he is about to charge on Hervi, his lament is very much that of a typically melancholic lover. Cries of 'Honis sui, destruis sui, mors sui!'<sup>117</sup> echo the heartbreak he has suffered.

It is when he meets the knight by the river that Daguenet actually reveals that he knows why he has become *fou*, thus placing himself above and apart from those other courtly lovers who have gone before. In telling the knight that if he is *fou*, it is for love, he demonstrates a level of self-awareness that Yvain, Tristan and Lancelot have been unable to achieve. Daguenet acknowledges both that he is *fou* and that he knows why, whilst none of the others showed any awareness of their condition whilst they were *fou*, let alone why they were afflicted in this way.

So where Daguenet was once the index for the love-*folie* of others, Lancelot in particular but also Tristan, he now combines that role with that of the hero himself, to become not an index for someone else's love-*folie*, but for his own. His words no longer point out the cause of another's folly, but point up instead his own tragedy-  
'se ge sui fol, ce fist amor.'<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> As we saw in Chapter One, p. 56.

<sup>117</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §166, l.28, p. 296.

<sup>118</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §170, ll.25-26, p. 302.

Daguenet does seem to fit the tradition of the knightly love-*folie* well. He has lost his lady-love, and subsequently lost his mind, just as Yvain, Lancelot and Tristan before him. But even here, the author of the *Guiron* does not content himself with merely following in the footsteps of previous literary tradition. He has not developed this whole new episode simply to regurgitate a traditional love-*folie* scenario. Whilst the story retains the appearance of this familiar theme, close inspection reveals important changes.

One of the most interesting changes is the role of the lady, Daguenet's bride. Yvain, Tristan and Lancelot all became *fou* as a result of the rejection, or perceived rejection, by their lady. Laudine rejects Yvain because he has failed to keep a promise to her to return to her within a year.<sup>119</sup> Guinevere rejects Lancelot because he has slept with another woman.<sup>120</sup> Tristan thinks that Iseut has rejected him in favour of another.<sup>121</sup> In each of these cases the lady played an active part in both the relationship and its rupture, the cause of each knight's descent into *folie*.

Daguenet's story is very different from this. To begin with, his relationship with his bride is quite unlike those enjoyed by Yvain, Tristan and Lancelot. Unlike Yvain's Laudine, Lancelot's Guinevere or Tristan's Iseut, Daguenet's wife is not

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<sup>119</sup> In *Le Chevalier au Lion*, Yvain is given a ring by Laudine as a symbol of their love when he departs from her. She makes him promise to return within a year, or their love will be lost. Yvain becomes involved in a series of tournaments and soon forgets the promise. Laudine eventually sends him a messenger to retrieve the ring and to tell Yvain that she does not want to see him again (Chrétien, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll. 2767-71, p. 802; see Chapter One, note 84)

<sup>120</sup> Lancelot is given a potion which makes him believe that the daughter of King Pellès is Guinevere, and he sleeps with her. Guinevere catches him in the act, and banishes him from her company, which precipitates Lancelot's third and longest period of *folie* (*Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.6, CV, §35 – CVII, §30, pp. 175-224; see also Chapter One, pp. 50-54).

<sup>121</sup> Kahedin, friend of Tristan, falls in love with Iseut and sends her a letter telling her so. Iseut replies as kindly as she can, but Tristan finds this letter and misinterprets it. This throws him into a deep

even named,<sup>122</sup> and this is symptomatic of the passive, yet also instrumental, role she plays. All we learn about her is that she is particularly beautiful - ‘de mout tres merueilleuse biautez’<sup>123</sup> - and high born - her father is lord of the Chastel Apparant. No reference is ever made to what Daguenet’s future wife thinks or feels about the union with Daguenet. There is no evidence of a close bond or relationship between the pair. There is no courtship, in which the love is demonstrably reciprocated. Daguenet falls in love with her, performs an heroic feat on behalf of her father and earns himself the right to ask for her hand in marriage. In fact, in many ways, the role of this love-interest seems to be reduced to its bare minimum - that of narrative convenience, a trigger for the events which follow.<sup>124</sup>

And just as she seems to play no active part in the relationship, nor does she seem to have actively sought to bring about its end. Unlike for Yvain, Tristan or Lancelot there is no rejection or perceived rejection by the lady. Instead she too is the victim of the betrayal which separates her from her husband. It is her abduction by Daguenet’s best friend, Helior de l’Espine, which causes her husband to lose his mind. Her role throughout is entirely passive. In contrast to this, of course, is the role of her abductor, Helior de l’Espine. Helior is the new element which the author introduces to the formula of love-*folie*, and which totally alters the dynamic of the situation.

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melancholy and ultimately he becomes *fou* (*Tristan*, ed. Curtis, iii, §§839-71, pp. 142-73; see also Chapter One, pp. 55-56).

<sup>122</sup> Although it is interesting to note that Laudine is only named in three of the ten manuscripts containing the *Yvain*. See Chrétien, *Romans*, ed. Zink, p. 706, note 1.

<sup>123</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §178, l.6, p.310.

<sup>124</sup> Whilst this two-dimensional portrayal of Daguenet’s wife does not go so far as to illustrate the ‘violent courant antiféministe’ which Lathuillère identifies as running through 3325 (Lathuillère, ‘Un exemple de l’évolution du roman arthurien en prose’, p. 396), it does perhaps demonstrate that, in this version of the *Guiron*, ‘que la femme reste en second plan’ (*Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, v, p. 119).

In stark contrast to Daguenet's bride, we learn a great deal about Helior. The economical, almost sparse nature of the description of Daguenet's wife is thrown into sharp relief against the wealth of information we are given about Helior. We are told his full name - Helior de l'Espine.<sup>125</sup> He and Daguenet are 'compeignons',<sup>126</sup> both described as 'biaux chevaliers.'<sup>127</sup> They go everywhere together, gaining great praise for their feats at the tournament at the Chastel Apparant, and even departing together once Daguenet is married. Unlike Yvain, Lancelot and Tristan, whose adventures were undertaken alone, Daguenet actively seeks out his companionship with Helior, who is the focus of his life before he meets his new wife. Nor does Helior seem to lose this close status subsequently to Daguenet's marriage, for they all leave from the castle together.

So when Helior abducts Daguenet's bride, Daguenet loses not only his new wife, but also his close friend. It is perhaps not difficult to imagine that, notwithstanding the passion aroused by love and beauty, Daguenet's longstanding knightly relationship with Helior could easily be as important, if not more so, than that with his new lady. The love and trust they must have shared through their knightly adventures, as each would perhaps put their life in the hands of the other, is not to be underestimated. Is it actually the loss of this relationship, the betrayal of his love for Helior, not the lady, which has had the most devastating effect on Daguenet?

A superficial reading of the episode would not necessarily indicate this as the essential elements of the familiar tragedy of lost love are present. But let us again consider what the author is trying to tell us. What is actually happening? Is it a reunion of the now *fou* Daguenet with his wife? This might be expected of such a

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<sup>125</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §178, l.18, p. 310.

<sup>126</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §178, l.13, p. 310.

<sup>127</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §178, l.17, p. 310.



short episode designed to emphasise the tragic effect of lost love. Instead, the parts of the story which will have the greatest impact on the reader – the very beginning and the very end – centre upon Daguenet's attack on Helior. The focus for the episode is not a joyous reunion, but a violent revenge, as Daguenet's rage is illustrated so graphically in the first lines of the episode, and finally justified in the last lines. Between these two points the reader is taken on an emotional journey in which his assumptions about Daguenet are questioned and finally overturned, with the revelation that the true victim is not the dead Helior, but the *fou* Daguenet.

Effectively, the episode as a whole illustrates not the effect of the loss of the Daguenet's love, but depicts instead the effect of Helior's betrayal. This shift in focus is evident in the words of the host knight who tells Daguenet's story to Hervi. Describing the consequences of Helior's abduction of Daguenet's wife, he says:

Einssint fu trahiz e deceuz vileinemant Daguenet par son compeignon; einsint perdi il sa  
moillier par celui q'il tant amoit et en cui il se fioit si durement.<sup>128</sup>

These were the events which were the direct cause of Daguenet's *folie*, and the emphasis is clear. The primary consequence of the abduction was the betrayal of Daguenet by his companion. Losing his wife comes only second to this, and even then she receives only a brief mention before the subject returns to the perpetrator of the offence. Without the words 'par celui', the sentence would easily have described the relationship we would expect between Daguenet and his lover, the loss of which love and trust has been seen in other romances to cause the mental breakdown of the knight. The presence of the collocation marks the transfer of this relationship from the wife to the companion.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>128</sup> *Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, iv, §181, ll.31-34, p. 315.

<sup>129</sup> Bubenicek uses these lines as unambiguous proof that it is the loss of the friendship not of his love which causes Daguenet's *folie*, and infers the reflection of a wider change in attitude (*Guiron*, ed. Bubenicek, v, p. 119):

So whilst retaining the basics of the theme of love-*folie*, the episode is suggesting a move away from a chivalry based purely in the love ethic, where a knight's deeds are inspired by his love for his lady, and the loss of which precipitates a kind of self-destruction. Tristan and Lancelot pursued their knightly careers alone, spurred on only by their love for the lady who in her turn reciprocated that love. Daguenet was not alone. His partner in life was not his wife, but his knightly companion, Helior, whom he loved and trusted. It is the rupture of this relationship, the rejection of one so close, which made him *fou*. The object of the love which Daguenet cites as the cause of his *folie* is not his lost bride, but 'celui q'il tant amoit': Helior.

Thus the author uses the blank canvas which is Daguenet's *folie* to introduce the idea that the friendship between knights, *compagnonnage*, might also rival the love of a lady in chivalric priorities. Friendship plays an important role elsewhere in the *Guiron*, and it is not uncommon that it should clash with the interests of love. In most cases, honour wins through, and the friendship is saved :

Roman d'amour, *Guiron le courtois* accorde une large place à l'amitié; elle résulte tout naturellement de la fraternité des ames ou de l'estime et de l'admiration que font naître les belles prouesses [...] Franchise et loyauté sont les conditions essentielles d'une amitié durable, mais la rivalité autour d'une même femme la soumet souvent à une ruse épreuve. Que de fois l'un des deux tombe amoureux de l'amie ou de l'épouse de l'autre! Il doit alors coûte que coûte vaincre sa passion, se taire ou s'effacer.<sup>130</sup>

This shift in the emphasis towards *compagnonnage* perhaps prefigures the later emphasis given to the bond between knights in Malory, where 'in the world of

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À la question de savoir s'il est devenu *fou* par amour ou pour avoir été trahi par son meilleur ami, la réponse donné par le texte est claire [...] À une époque, en effet, où la chevalerie recherche des certitudes l'esprit de corps s'est extraordinairement renforcé et l'on a l'impression que, pour survivre, le monde chevaleresque a besoin de reserrer les rangs: le *compagnonnage*[sic] et l'amitié remplace donc l'amour.

This shift in the emphasis towards *compagnonnage* perhaps prefigures the later emphasis given to the bond between knights in Malory, see below, note 131.

<sup>130</sup> Lathuillère, *Analyse*, p. 151

Arthurian knight-errantry the love which binds knights together in fellowship may be as powerful in its effects as the love of a knight for his lady'.<sup>131</sup>

And so Daguenet, supporting actor to the stars of the *Tristan* and the *Lancelot*, finally becomes the star of a little romance of his own.<sup>132</sup> Although many of the themes and motifs from both Daguenet's previous appearances and other portrayals of *folie* are present, the author of the *Guiron* uses his skills of 're-creation'<sup>133</sup> to weave familiar strands together to form a new narrative cloth. As well as introducing the element of *compagnonnage* as a possible factor in his *folie*, for the first time, Daguenet is provided with a story, a history, a reason for his *folie*. The *Guiron* marks a significant development in the portrayal of Daguenet: he is transformed from the two-dimensional *fou de cour* of the *Tristan* and the *Lancelot* into a thinking, feeling, fully rounded character who, in the place of 'soulas' and 'envoiseüre', inspires the respect and sympathy of those around him.

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<sup>131</sup> Beverley Kennedy, *Knighthood in the Morte Darthur*, *Arthurian Studies*, 11 (Cambridge: Brewer, 1985), p. 203. See also Elizabeth Archibald, 'Malory's Ideal of Fellowship', *Review of English Studies*, 43 (1992), 311-28.

<sup>132</sup> Describing the story of Pelleas and Arcade in the *Suite de Merlin* as an embryonic form of the *nouvelle*, Janet Ferrier says: 'The story is so self-contained that it is possible to isolate it in this way and consider it as a separate piece of narrative' (Ferrier, *Forerunners of the French Novel*, p. 15), a description which could easily also apply to our episode.

<sup>133</sup> See note 45.

## Chapter Five

### *Daguenet in the 'Prophécies de Merlin'*

Despite the fact that Daguenet has consistently been referred to as Arthur's 'fol', none of his adventures have so far taken place at the court of that king. This is finally achieved with one of his latest and more complex of appearances in the *Prophécies de Merlin*,<sup>1</sup> where Daguenet finds himself firmly ensconced at the heart

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<sup>1</sup> The *Prophécies de Merlin* is the latest of the romances in which Daguenet appears, dating from the last quarter of the thirteenth century, probably between 1272 and 1279 (see: *Les Prophecies de Merlin: edited from ms. 593 in the Bibliothèque Municipale of Rennes*, ed. by Lucy Allen Paton, Modern Language Association of America Monograph Series, 1, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press; New York: Heath, 1926), p. 346; and *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages: A Collaborative History* ed. by Roger Sherman Loomis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 352). Paton describes the relationship of the *Prophécies* to earlier Arthurian material (*Prophecies*, ed. Paton, ii, p. 347):

There is no ground for considering the *Prophecies* a 'suite' to any romance or the member of any 'cycle' of romances, and no indication that it was written primarily for the sake of completing or prolonging any other work, although it contains the continuation of some situations that are found in both the *Lancelot* and the *Palamedes*. Its closest relations are with these two romances.

There are two editions of this text. Lucy Allen Paton's edition, which is of Rennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, ms. 593, also contains a comprehensive analysis of the manuscript tradition as well as discussions of various aspects of the romance as a whole. The manuscript she chose to edit does not contain the episode we shall be looking at, although she does provide a summary of this material (*Prophecies*, ed. Paton, i, pp. 378-406). It is in Anne Berthelot's edition of the Codex Bodmer 116 (*Les Prophecies de Merlin: Cod. Bodmer 116* (Cologny-Geneva: Fondation Martin Bodmer, 1992), that this episode can be found, which I shall use for the purposes of this study. Berthelot includes little critical apparatus beyond the basic text of the manuscript.

Although our episode is not found in the manuscript on which her edition is based, Paton concludes that the material of which it forms a part (the 'Tournament of Sorelois' and the 'Saxon Invasion') was indeed probably included in the original version of the *Prophécies de Merlin* (*Prophecies*, ed. Paton, ii, p. 254).

of the king's court. But this is not the court with which we are familiar, nor are its inhabitants behaving as we might expect. In fact, Daguenet's role in this episode is particularly puzzling, as it is notable not for his *folie*, but for its apparent absence.<sup>2</sup>

Our initial introduction to the odd circumstances in which Daguenet is involved comes through a series of brief reports from people who have visited Arthur's court in search of assistance. None of them finds the help they were seeking, and the tales of their experiences are later related at a tournament being held in Sorelois.

The first account comes from an unnamed damsel, who had been challenged for the right to her land by an aggressive neighbour. In need of a champion to fight on her behalf in defence of this land, she had taken her case to the court of King Arthur. As her king, she had the right to expect his protection against threats to her land, and his legendary court should also be full of potential champions to send out on her behalf.<sup>3</sup>

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All references will be to Berthelot's edition, and will state page number and folio number as marked in her text by Berthelot. Berthelot and Paton use their own spellings for the title of the romance – *Prophecies* and *Prophesies* respectively – which I shall use for reference to the individual editions, although for more general references to the romance I shall retain the correct modern French spelling *Prophécies*.

<sup>2</sup> This episode also seems to take the form of a *nouvelle*. See Chapter Four, note 115.

<sup>3</sup> 'Le seigneur est également tenu d'assister le vassal de ses conseils et de lui faire bonne justice; enfin, s'il lui a concédé un fief, il doit lui en garantir la possession, en d'autres mots, il doit le défendre contre les tentatives qui pourraient être faites, de le lui enlever' (F.L.Ganshof, *Qu'est-ce que la féodalité?*, 4th edn (Brussels: Presses Universitaires de Bruxelles, 1968), p. 115). Feudal society was based on a series of similar and reciprocal obligations. Marc Bloch characterises the relationship as that of reciprocal service and protection: '“Servir”, ou, comme on disait aussi, “aider”; - “protéger”: c'était en ces termes très simples que les plus anciens textes résumaient les obligations inverses du fidèle armé et de son chef' (Marc Bloch, *La Société féodale: la formation des liens de dépendance* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1939), p. 337). As Ganshof points out, 'L'objet de l'obligation du seigneur présente un parallélisme très marqué avec l'objet de l'obligation du vassal,' because, as well as the demands placed upon the vassal for military service and homage to the lord, 'le seigneur doit

When the damsel arrives at court, she is surprised to find a rather odd situation.

We are told that, at that time, the court is ‘a Daguenet’:

Cele damoisele s'en estoit alee a la court le roi Artu; mais la cours estoit a celui point a  
Daguenet.<sup>4</sup>

She meets neither Arthur nor Daguenet. The only knight who seems to be available to offer any kind of assistance is Sagremor, who is himself unwell:

Illuec avoit un chevalier malade ke on apeloit Saigremor le Desree.<sup>5</sup>

What he tells her is rather shocking. Instead of helping her, Arthur's court could in fact cause her more harm than good:

Lors li fist apieler devant lui et li dist: 'Damoisele, par defaute de ceste court aures vous  
damage et perdres vostre terre.'<sup>6</sup>

The only advice he can give to her is to seek out Palamedes, a knight whom Sagremor knows to be in the neighbourhood, and who might offer her help. She finds him, he defeats her enemy, and she accompanies him to a tournament where the story of her experience at Arthur's court is related to Prince Galehout and the other knights gathered there.

The second account comes from a messenger sent by the Count of Dover, who sends news of the threat of impending invasion by the Saxons at Winchester. Before arriving at Sorelois on the second day of the tournament, he had taken the news to

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à son vassal protection et entretien'(Ganshof, *Qu'est-ce que la féodalité?*, p. 88). The fact that in this case the querant is a woman, and therefore unable to fight on her own behalf, highlights the king's failure to offer her any protection. As we shall see, Arthur will also fail in a number of other areas relating to these feudal obligations. On the subject of medieval feudalism in France, see also: Charles Petit-Dutaillis, *La Monarchie féodale en France et en Angleterre: Xe-XIIIe siècle* (Paris: La Renaissance du Livre, 1933); Jacques le Goff, *Pour un autre moyen âge: temps, travail et culture en Occident, 18 essais* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977); Guy Fourquin, *Seigneurie et féodalité au moyen âge*, 2nd edn (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1977; first publ. 1970); *Histoire de la vie privée*, ed. by Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby, 5 vols (Paris: Seuil, 1985-87), ii: *De l'Europe féodale à la Renaissance*, ed. by Georges Duby and others (1985).

<sup>4</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 166, 71Rb.

<sup>5</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 166, 71Rb.

<sup>6</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 166, 71Rb.

Arthur, but he too had encountered the same strange situation as the damsel. Unlike her, the messenger had actually managed to see Arthur, but to little effect, as Arthur failed to respond and then simply left the room:

Quant iou fui devant le roi Artu et iou li contai la nouvele, sachiez ke il n'en dist ne cou ne  
quoi, ains baissa sa teste et s'en ala en sa cambre.<sup>7</sup>

As soon as Arthur had disappeared into his own room, Daguenet appeared and offered the messenger hospitality:

Et lors vint avant uns chevaliers foursenes et me dist: 'Dans chevaliers, venes mangier.' Et  
iou m'en alai o lui dont il me fist aseoir a une table et me fist doner a mangier a grant  
plente.<sup>8</sup>

During this meal, the messenger learnt more about the situation at court. It appeared that all the knights of the Round Table have left, and Daguenet had been left to run the court:

Li chevaliers avoit a non Dagues. Et iou li demandai ou li compaignon de la Table  
Reonde estoient ale. Et il me dist que il se sunt departi de la court et tint cascuns sa voie, et  
ke il estoit remes senescaus et bouteilliers et counestables. Et sachiez certainement,  
combien ke il soit foursenes, ke il est mout courtois et mout biax parliers.<sup>9</sup>

Realising that he would get no practical aid from Arthur, the messenger then rode to Sorelois in search of help, where he now recounts these events:

Quant iou me fui disnes et iou vic que iou n'avoie que demorer en la court, si montai  
errantment et m'en vint ceste part, car iou sai vraiment ke se vous ne donnes secours,  
nous soumes tout escilliet et trestous li roiaumes de Logres en sera en aventure, de voir le  
sachiez.<sup>10</sup>

The third account comes on the evening of the same day, when a knight called Saphar<sup>11</sup> arrives at Sorelois. He is accompanied by four other knights, and has come to seek help for them in their struggle against a giant called Caradoc. Like the damsel, and the messenger before them, these four knights had also first taken their

<sup>7</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 172, 74Vb.

<sup>8</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 172, 74Vb.

<sup>9</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 172, 74Vb.

<sup>10</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 172, 74Vb.

<sup>11</sup> Saphar is the brother of Palamedes.

plight to Arthur. Their experience at his court mirrors that of the messenger from Winchester. Firstly, they too manage to speak to Arthur, but they too are shunned by the king, who, having heard their request, does not reply, but simply takes himself away to his room:

Il furent devant le roi Artu n'a pas encore un mois et demi; il venoit du moustier, dont il n'avoit pas oi le servise. Il fisent la clamour de sor Caradoc et il les oi mout bien, mais dou respondre est il noiens; car il ne lor respondi ne poi ne grant ains s'en entra en la cambre.<sup>12</sup>

Then, just as he had done for the messenger, Daguenet appears and offers them hospitality:

Et lors vint pour iaus uns chevaliers foursenes et les fist aler en une sale. Illuec lor fist donner a mangier a grant plente.<sup>13</sup>

This time Daguenet offers not only hospitality, but practical help. He says that he will take on the giant himself on behalf of the knights:

Seigneur chevalier, laissies de sour moi Carado, iou vous em prendrai la veniance anscois que demi ans soit passes.<sup>14</sup>

So what do we learn from these second-hand accounts? They certainly whet the appetite of the audience to want to know more about the strange situation at Arthur's court. What can it mean that the court is 'a Daguenet'? Is Arthur absent for some reason, or incapacitated? What is Daguenet's role?

We can perhaps best appreciate the extent of the unusual nature of the situation at court if we compare it to a description of the court as it normally appears in the prose *Lancelot*:

It[Arthur's court] performs its traditional function as the centre of chivalry throughout the whole of Christendom and even beyond, for in the *PL* the fame of the Round Table provides a focus for all the greatest knights of the world, as it had done in Wace, Chrétien de Troyes, and Robert de Boron. It is also the centre of Arthur's feudal kingdom within which it is his responsibility as *suserain* to protect his vassals. In the chronicles Arthur is presented as an active king, not simply presiding as the rather passive figure of most of Chrétien's romances

<sup>12</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 179, 78Vb.

<sup>13</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 179, 78Vb.

<sup>14</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 179, 78Vb.



over a court from which his knights set out on adventure, but with a land to govern, armies to lead, barons to control, enemies to be defeated. In the *PL* particular emphasis is given to the King's responsibilities towards individual vassals who hold lands from him in return for providing knights for his wars. In relation to this the Knights of the Round Table serve not so much as champions of justice in a general sense, but as aids to the King to see that the rights of vassals within Arthur's kingdom are protected.<sup>15</sup>

The court portrayed so far in the *Prophécies* bears little relation to the court as described by Kennedy. Firstly, it is no longer the 'focus for all the greatest knights'. Daguenet tells the messenger that in fact all the knights of the Round Table have left. All that remains are Arthur's 'fol', Daguenet, who, from our previous experiences of him does not qualify as a 'great knight',<sup>16</sup> and Sagremor le Desree,<sup>17</sup> who appears to have remained only because he is ill and therefore currently incapable of departing.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Kennedy, *Lancelot and the Grail*, p. 79. This comparison is particularly relevant because, as we shall see, this episode takes place within the context of an episode in the prose *Lancelot* – that of the False Guinevere. A summary of this episode can be found in Appendix Four.

<sup>16</sup> Excepting of course the description of his previous life as a great knight created for him by the *Guiron*.

<sup>17</sup> Sagremor frequently appears in Arthurian romances, but seldom in a primary role, as Kibler notes ('Sagremor in the Arthurian Verse Romances', p. 283):

'Sagremors li Desreez is one of the most ubiquitous but also one of the most elusive knights in Arthur's kingdom. His name appears at some point in nearly all the Arthurian verse and prose romances in French, from Chrétien in the twelfth century to Froissart in the fourteenth. His prominent position in lists of the Round Table knights makes it clear that he was considered early and often as one of Arthur's principal knights, but he is rarely accorded an adventure of his own, and never becomes the hero of his own romance'. Here too he is not accorded the honour of his own adventure, as his role here seems to be simply to support Daguenet and he does not appear elsewhere in the *Prophécies*.

Whilst no explanation is given why it is specifically Sagremor who has fallen ill and remains at court, it seems possible that he was chosen by virtue of his soubriquet – 'le Desree'. The author possibly also used Sagremor because his sobriquet suggests a certain instability appropriate in the circumstances. Tobler-Lommatzsch and Godefroy give the following definitions: Tobler-Lommatzsch: *desrêe* - aus der Ordnung bringen, aus der Ordnung treten, das Maß überschreiten, sich übermütig benehmen; *desrêé* - ungeordnet, übermütig, ungebärdig, wild (Tobler-Lommatzsch, ii, pp. 1723-25). Godefroy: *desreer* - faire sortir du chemin, de l'ordre, du rang; *dérégler*, égarer, dérouter, troubler, mettre en mauvais état; quitter son ordre, son rang, se déranger, s'écarter du droit chemin au propre et au figure; *desrée* - qui a quitté son ordre, son rang, son chemin; qui est mis en désordre, emporté; desordonné, capricieux; qui est sorti du bon sens, égaré, troublé, farouche; déréglé,

Secondly, it no longer seems to be ‘the centre of Arthur’s feudal kingdom within which it is his responsibility as suzerain to protect his vassals’. Three different requests for aid have been made to his court, and three times they have been unsuccessful. The first, the request from the damsel for a champion to defend her land, is a prime example of Arthur’s feudal obligation to protect his vassals. As a feudal monarch, Arthur not only has the right to demand loyalty and military service from his vassals, but he too owes them a reciprocal duty to protect and maintain.<sup>19</sup> The extent of the failure of this court to provide adequate aid is underlined particularly by the fact it is only a knight who is *not* of the Round Table, Palamedes, who can offer help. Not only are none of the knights of the Round Table at court, but the court is apparently not even in a position to call upon them for any kind of assistance.

But what is perhaps more worrying than the absence of these knights is the attitude of King Arthur himself. Whilst this is not mentioned in the damsel’s account, the messenger and the four knights make it quite clear that Arthur himself was not interested in offering aid to those who came seeking it. He is certainly no longer an ‘active king’ seeking to defend his vassals and his lands. He does not even bother to reply to the pleas for help before he retreats to his own room. He is interested neither in his feudal duties to the individual vassals as represented by the damsel, nor his responsibility to defend the whole kingdom, as represented by the message from Winchester.

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qui s’écarte de la justice, de l’honneur (Godefroy, ii, pp. 639-40). As we can see, ‘desree’ carries a strong sense of disorder, of things out of place, a theme which is key to this whole episode. This is not the only time the author uses the name of a character to reflect the narrative context, as he highlights the theme of *folie* with the name he gives to Arthur’s treasurer (see below, note 84).

<sup>18</sup> Indeed, when he recovers, he too leaves the court for Winchester. See below, note 135.

<sup>19</sup> See above, note 3.

So we can see that the description of the court as portrayed in the *Prophécies* is very different to that which we would expect, up to and including the behaviour of the king himself. But if the picture we get of Arthur goes against our expectations of him, then the one which we get of Daguenet is equally puzzling. In his previous appearances, particularly in the prose *Lancelot* and prose *Tristan*, he had been portrayed as a *fou*, ‘le fol le roi Artus’,<sup>20</sup> ‘la plus coarde pieche de car’,<sup>21</sup> frequently barely capable of coherent speech, and generally lacking in any social or courtly manners or awareness. Yet now, he is described by the messenger as both ‘mout biax parliers’ and ‘mout courtois’. He is clearly aware of a duty of hospitality towards guests,<sup>22</sup> as twice he intervenes to offer food to those so recently rejected by the king. His offer to tackle the giant Caradoc on behalf of the knights also belies his reputation as a coward.

Perhaps more important in this portrayal of Daguenet is the total lack of any hint of amusement or entertainment. In his previous appearances, Daguenet was a

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<sup>20</sup> See Chapter One, note 6.

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter Two, note 13 .

<sup>22</sup> In her extensive chapter on the subject, Chênerie describes the importance of hospitality (*Le Chevalier errant*, p. 514):

Le prestige qui entoure celui qui reçoit abolit les différences hiérarchiques, s'il y en a. L'hôte et l'errant tirent de l'hospitalité un surcroît d'honneur, dont chacun est avide. On raffine sur un rituel où cet honneur aristocratique retrouve les valeurs universelles de l'hospitalité. Partout où sera mis en place le thème du bon gîte, l'hospitalité sera la meilleure possible, la réalité ne servant que de support à l'idéalisation. Le détail pourra être omis, notamment dans les pauvres demeures, l'effet sera le même; car dans le contexte romanesque, c'est moins la fortune qui compte que la générosité ou l'éclat avec lesquels elle est dépensée; chez les grands et les habitants de l'Autre Monde, les auteurs s'attarderont volontiers sur l'élégance et la richesse d'un accueil qui comble les goûts et les rêves de l'aristocratie, et qui correspond à ces privilèges mérités dont le chevalier errant donne la meilleure image.

She goes on to describe how the food that was on offer reflected the wealth of the household: the better the food, the better the household. See also: Edoardo Esposito, ‘Les formes d’hospitalité dans le roman courtois du *Roman de Thèbes* à Chrétien de Troyes’, *Romania*, 103 (1982), pp. 197-234 and Brian Woledge, ‘Bons Vavasseurs et mauvais sénéchaux’, *Mélanges offerts à Rita Lejeune, Professeur à l’Université de Liège*, 2 vols (Gembloux: Duculot, 1969), ii, pp. 1263-77.

source of amusement and entertainment for those he was with, who frequently exploited his *folie* for their own purposes.<sup>23</sup> Thus he was also closely associated with laughter. In the prose *Lancelot* and the prose *Tristan*, his mere presence was enough to arouse the expectation in the audience of forthcoming amusement or entertainment. His words and deeds usually provoked laughter in his audience, a laughter which constantly reaffirmed his place in the pecking order: he was Arthur's 'fol' and nothing he said or did was to be taken seriously.<sup>24</sup>

This side to Daguenet appears to be completely absent from the character described by these visitors, and may lead us to suspect that this is not the same Daguenet with whom we have previously dealt. Perhaps the author has simply created a new character, recycling Daguenet's name. There is no sign of the familiar epithet 'le fol' which would provide some certainty of identification. Daguenet's behaviour shows no sign of any *folie*, and in fact his claim to be fulfilling the important roles of the absent 'senescaus et bouteilliers et counestables'<sup>25</sup> cannot

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<sup>23</sup> In the *Tristan*, for example, a plan is hatched to humiliate King Mark using Daguenet by fooling the king into believing that Daguenet was Lancelot and thus prompting the king to flee. See Chapter Three, pp. 125 ff.

<sup>24</sup> For example, when Daguenet told the returning Arthur that he had taken Lancelot prisoner, the king simply laughed. See Chapter Two, note 55.

<sup>25</sup> Daguenet's claim to have been fulfilling these three particular roles is significant because of the important positions these officers held at court. Originally, they had been in charge of the more practical tasks connected to the running of the court. Charles Petit-Dutaillis (*La Monarchie féodale en France*, p. 88) describes the range of these and other similar roles towards the end of the eleventh century at the French court:

Il fallait bien un sénéchal, un connétable et un bouteiller pour commander les chevauchées, administrer la maison royale, préparer les gîtes, veiller aux récoltes; un chambrier et des chambellans pour garder la chambre du roi et ses dépendances, avec les robes, les fourrures, les armes, les bijoux du prince et son trésor, qui était conservé près de lui; un chancelier et des clercs pour rédiger, expédier et sceller les diplômes; des chapelains pour le service religieux. Ces familiers ont dû, de temps en temps, jouer un rôle décisif, que nous devinons.

merely be dismissed as a delusion of *folie*, but is confirmed by the reports of the witnesses.

So are we now in a better position to answer any of the questions raised by the narrator's opening statement? An explanation for the assertion that the court is 'a Daguenet' certainly seems to present itself from the evidence of the three witnesses. King Arthur is indeed present at court, but shows practically no interest in any of its affairs, retreating to the safety of his own room rather than answering any call for his assistance. His disappearance prompts the appearance of Daguenet, who offers the guests hospitality where the king has failed to entertain, and even goes so far as to offer himself as champion. On top of this, Daguenet, in the absence of any of Arthur's other knights, claims to be filling the posts of 'senescaus et bouteillier et counestables.' In other words, the court is 'a Daguenet' in as much that Arthur, for some reason, is failing to fulfil his duties and responsibilities, and Daguenet is the only one willing or able to fill the gaps to keep the court going.

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He notes that the growing importance of these officers, a 'transformation de la diplomatie royale' (p. 88), was witnessed by the increasingly frequent appearance of their signatures on important documents (p. 88):

Ce sont eux qui souscrivent et attestent les diplômes royaux; après 1085, les souscriptions de comtes diminuent de nombre et finalement disparaissent, tandis que celles de simples chevaliers du palais se multiplient; les souscriptions des grands officiers (sénéchal, connétable, bouteiller, chambrier), jusqu'alors éparses au milieu des autres, se groupent, et enfin, dans deux actes de 1106 et 1107, apparaissent seules, précédées de la formule qui allait faire fortune: 'Étants présents, de notre Palais, ceux dont les noms et seings figurent ci-dessous'.

By the thirteenth century, these officers had detached themselves from the everyday chores, becoming instead the close advisors of the king (pp. 259-60):

Les plus importants des «domestiques» de l'Hôtel avaient été à l'origine le sénéchal, le connétable, le bouteillier, le chambrier. On les appelle encore, dans un arrêt de 1224, *ministeriales* de l'hôtel du roi. Ils s'étaient détachés de la domesticité et étaient devenues, avec le chancelier, les grands officiers de la Couronne [...] Ces grands officiers sont les hommes de confiance de la Royauté, sans attributions strictement spécialisées.

Therefore, Daguenet is claiming to be fulfilling roles which were not just servants of the court but at the heart of the court and close to the king himself. See also *Histoire de la vie privée*, ii, ed. Duby, 'De l'Europe féodale à la Renaissance', pp. 85-87.

For a possible explanation for this odd situation, we must turn briefly to its context. Although the *Prophécies* itself does not contain much background information, we are informed by the narrator that these events are taking place within the context of an episode in the prose *Lancelot*, that of the False Guinevere.<sup>26</sup> Arthur

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<sup>26</sup> The context for this episode is provided by an earlier visitor to Arthur's court. This character, known as the Sages Cler, passed through a very different court from the one we have just seen described. Far from having been abandoned, Arthur is surrounded by Galehout, Lancelot and other knights of the Round Table (*Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 136, 54Va):

Illuec estoit li rois Artus et li haus princes Galehous li fuis a la bele Jaiande, li sires des Lointainnes Illes, et Lanselos dou Lac et trestout li baron del roiaume de Logres, et une grans partie des compaignons de la Table Reonde.

But everything is not well. Arthur and his barons have fallen out over the False Guinevere (*Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 136, 54Va):

Li rois Artus estoit a celui point mout courouchies, et si vous dirai pourquoi. Il avoit a celui tans prise la damoisele de Carmelide, cele que Bertelai li Vieus avoit tesmoigne ke ele estoit fille del seneschal, et l'oquoison pour quoi li rois Artus estoit courouchies vous dirai iou. Cele roine ke il avoit prise nouvelement li amonestroit ke il fesist destruire l'autre roine. Et il, comme chil ki avugles estoit a l'amour de li, en avoit pourcachie le jugement encontre la volente des barons dou roiaume de logres; mais li bons Lanselos del Lac l'avoit delivree.

Further detail is not forthcoming from this author, and we are referred instead to the tale as it appears in the prose *Lancelot* (*Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 136, 54Va):

Ensi com li contes de la fause Jenyevre le tiesmoigne vraiment, dont iou ne vous en conterai riens, pour cou ke il est translate del latin en roumant si comme en francois, car bien en parole el livre de Lanselot et liu il en doit parler, ains tenrai mon droit conte ensi com a mon livre apiertient.

Cross-reference with the text of the prose *Lancelot* shows us that this visitor has arrived at Arthur's court shortly after Lancelot has fought as Queen Guinevere's champion in order save her from death, but before the same queen has actually been exiled from court, as both Galehout and Lancelot are still present.

By the time the damsel arrives at Arthur's court, the situation has clearly moved on. Guinevere is now at Sorelois, along with Galehout and Lancelot (*Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 163, 69Va-69Vb):

Or distes li contes ke a l'endemain se leva li Haus Princes Galehous auques matin et autresi fissent li baron et li chevalier ke grant talent avoient de tornoier. [...] Li chevalier furent arme et les dames furent montees as loges avoec la reine Jenyevre; et lors commence li tournoiemens de toutes pars, et li chevalier commencent a caoir a la terre li uns cha et li autres la. [...] Et sachies bien que Lanselos del Lac avoit cangies ses armes.

This correlates with events in the prose *Lancelot*, where, once Guinevere had been saved from death by Lancelot's duels, Galehout had offered to let her stay with his court at Sorelois. For further discussion of this episode, see the following: for the non-cyclic version of the episode, see *Lancelot*, ed. Kennedy, i, pp. 585-608; *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol. 3, pp. 22-61. For further discussion of the two versions of this episode, see: Alexandre Micha, 'Les épisodes du Voyage en Sorelois et de la Fausse

has exiled his true queen and accepted the False Guinevere as his wife. Unfortunately, the prose *Lancelot* gives us no help in understanding the precise situation as described by the damsel and her fellow visitors to Arthur's court. Although we can place events as taking place during Guinevere's exile at Sorelois, the text of the prose *Lancelot* passes over this time very briefly. It is noted only that she is there in the company of Galehout and Lancelot:

En tel maniere fu la roine en la terre de Sorelois et ot assés sovent la compaignie Galehout  
et de son ami.<sup>27</sup>

and that she stayed there for two years:

Ensint demora en Sorelois .II. ans la roine.<sup>28</sup>

No tournament at Sorelois is mentioned, indicating, as Paton suggests,<sup>29</sup> that the tournament which provides the context for this episode in the *Prophécies*, along with the Saxon Invasion and the strange events we are witnessing here, are original inventions by the author of the *Prophécies*.

Lacking any further elucidation, we are led to only one, albeit vague, conclusion: the strange state of Arthur and his court is linked to his relationship with the False Guinevere. Her involvement with the king is implicated in his odd behaviour, which appears to be reflected by his court as a whole. The knights of Round Table, champions of justice and knightly adventure, have abandoned their traditional base, so much so that it is to a pagan knight, Palamedes, that the damsel

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Guenièvre', *Romania*, 76 (1955), 334-41 (repr. in Alexandre Micha, *De la chanson de geste au roman* (Geneva: Droz, 1976), pp. 243-50); Elspeth Kennedy, 'The two versions of the False Guenevere Episode in the Old French Prose *Lancelot*'; Elspeth Kennedy, *Lancelot and the Grail*, pp. 253-73, Chapter 10, 'Lancelot with the Grail: first stage: the two versions of the Journey to Sorelois, the False Guenevere episode, and the Death of Galehot'; Micha, *Essais*, pp. 57-83, Chapter 3, 'La Version spéciale du Voyage en Sorelois et de la Fausse Guenièvre'. See the summary of this episode in Appendix Four.

<sup>27</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.1, IX, §4, p. 153.

<sup>28</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.1, IX, §4, p. 153.

<sup>29</sup> See note 1.

must turn in her quest for a champion. Even the high officers, Arthur's barons - 'senescaus et bouteilliers et counestables'<sup>30</sup> - who usually remain with the king, are absent. Most bizarre though is the behaviour of Arthur's 'fol', Daguenet. Most frequently the object of court entertainment and amusement at his *folies* and lack of knightly prowess, he has here apparently suddenly acquired a talent for courtly conversation and hospitality which extends to deputising for absent officers and even offering himself as champion.

But here the author leaves his audience to ponder this for nearly twenty folios.<sup>31</sup> During this gap, the tournament at Sorelois continues, and at the same time Galehout and the others make preparations for the impending war against the Saxons, a danger about which the messenger had earlier brought warning. The invaders are nearing Winchester, and Galehout decides his place is with his armies. He asks Gaheriet, a nephew of Arthur, to remain at Sorelois in his place. Whilst explaining this to Gaheriet, Galehout reiterates the apparent troubles at Arthur's court:

Gaheriet, on me va contant que vous stes uns des boins chevaliers et des courtois ki soit el lignage le roi Artu; vous saves vraiment comment li rois Artus e courouchies a la roine Jenyevre, sa femme, et si saves le grant destoubrier ki est avenus au roi Artu; que de par l'apostoile, que de par ses barons ki deguerpis ont sa court.<sup>32</sup>

Galehout's comments are notable for several reasons. Firstly, he confirms that the 'destoubrier' at Arthur's court is connected to the situation involving the False Guinevere. The anger he refers to is the anger Arthur has with the true Guinevere because he believes the accusations of the impostor. He also mentions two further

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<sup>30</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 172, 74Vb.

<sup>31</sup> In Bodmer 116, upon which manuscript Berthelot's edition is based.

<sup>32</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 199, 90Rb.



possible factors in the decline of his court, some form of intervention by the Pope and the abandonment of the court by the knights.

The reference to the Pope is an allusion to the papal interdict placed upon Arthur as a result of his rejection of his wife Guinevere. In the prose *Lancelot*, the pope expresses his disapproval of this action:

Tant alerent les choses que le pape de Rome qui lors tenoit le siege le sot, si le tint a molt grant despit, quant si haus hom com li rois de Bretaine avoit deguerpie sa feme sans le seu de Sainte Iglise: si a commandé que la venjance Mostre Seignor soit espandue par la terre ou il prist sa premiere feme, tant que il fust racordés par Sainte Iglise. En ceste maniere fu entredite la terre le roi Artu vint et un mois.<sup>33</sup>

However, the desertion of Arthur's barons has no such basis in the prose *Lancelot*. Arthur's barons, although they threaten to abandon Arthur if he should put the true Guinevere to death, relent when she is saved by Lancelot.<sup>34</sup> But there is little doubt that for Galehout at least the connection between Arthur's treatment of the Queen and the barons' disappearance is clear.

Once Galehout has left Sorelois and the queen in the hands of his nephew, nothing more is mentioned of the Saxons' invasion before the narrative finds itself at Arthur's court. There, in a brief but intense episode, detail is added to the picture which has been built up by the earlier accounts of the visitors to the tournament, and in particular the uncharacteristic behaviours of both Arthur and Daguenet.

It begins by focussing upon Arthur. Without any preamble, the narrative turns to a conversation between Sagremor and the king, in which Sagremor confronts Arthur with the details of his negligence and negative attitude. Sagremor lists the things for which Arthur is responsible, yet chooses to ignore:

Ha! Sire, k'iestes vous devenus? Certes on vous devoit honir dou cors; ou sunt vos baron alet? Ou sunt li grant tornoiement ke vous solies tenir et faire maintenir par mi le roiaume de

<sup>33</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, IX, §4, p. 153.

<sup>34</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol. I, VIII, §5- §45, pp. 125-144. See Appendix Four.

Logres? Ou sunt les puceles orfenines ke vous solies marier? Ou sunt li nouviel chevalier  
ke vous solies a doubler?<sup>35</sup>

His lack of barons and failure to hold tournaments invite shame upon him, as does his failure to perform the feudal duties towards the vassals who rely on him. He is failing to fulfil his duty as guardian towards the orphans of his vassals, and failing to uphold his duty to create new knights.<sup>36</sup> In fact, it seems that Arthur has simply lost

<sup>35</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 211, 97Rb.

<sup>36</sup> This is a reference in particular to the king's duty as guardian towards any orphaned children of his vassals. The relationship between vassal and lord resembled a tie of kinship: 'Le vassal, vis-à-vis du seigneur, le seigneur vis-à-vis du vassal demeura longtemps comme un parent supplémentaire, volontiers assimilé dans ses devoirs comme dans ses droits aux proches par le sang' (Marc Bloch, *La Société féodale*, p. 346). As such, when a child was orphaned, 'le roi et prince suzerain prennent sous leur défense et sous leur coupe le fils ou la fille de leur vassal.' (*Histoire de la vie privée*, ii, ed. Duby, p. 158). Girl orphans, to whom Sagremors refers here, would be taken in and found appropriate husbands (see Bloch, *La Société féodale*, pp. 347-48). More often than not, however, this was done to the best advantage of the lord and not necessarily according to the choice of the girl, as it was in the interest of the suzerain to ensure that the lands or service owed to him were placed in favourable hands (Ganshof, *Qu'est-ce que la féodalité?*, pp. 129-30):

Le service du vassal devant être assuré et le femme n'étant *ob imbecillitatem sexus*, 'à raison de la faiblesse de son sexe', pas même de le fournir, quelqu'un devait en être chargé pour elle: ce représentant était agréé par le seigneur et lui prêtait, le cas échéant, foi et hommage. Quand la femme était mariée, ce représentant était le mari; aussi les seigneurs ont-ils prétendu intervenir dans le mariage de leurs vassaux féminins ou des femmes pouvant prétendre à la qualité de vassal.

Before an orphan boy could take a wife, he had to be knighted: 'Lorsqu'on voulait marier un jeune homme, on commençait par l'adoubier, on ne couronnait un roi mineur qu'après l'avoir adoubé', P. Guilhaumoz, *Essai sur l'origine de la noblesse en France au moyen âge* (Paris: Picard, 1902), p. 397. Dubbing knights was also an important feudal duty whereby the lord or king could reward service and add to those from whom he could expect homage. Whilst any knight could, in theory, dub another, the more honour each knight possessed, the more they could confer (Chênerie, *Le Chevalier errant*, p. 44):

Mais un roi, du fait qu'il est au sommet de la pyramide féodale, confère plus de noblesse à celui à qui il donne la chevalerie. Au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle ne se réservera-t-il pas le droit d'anoblir les *vilains* avant de les adoubier? Et plus un roi est grand, plus il attribue de prestige à ce qui peut être tenu pour un titre personnel. Alexandre repousse la chevalerie offerte par le roi son père, pour être adoubé par Arthur; mériter cet honneur grandira Alexandre doublement: Arthur n'est il pas le roi des meilleurs chevaliers du monde?.

For a discussion of the development of the knighting ceremony, see Richard Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*, 2nd edn (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1974), pp. 38-49 and Richard Barber, 'When is a knight not

interest in ‘the greatest of the royal virtues’: *largesse*.<sup>37</sup> Holding tournaments not only gave his knights the chance to prove their worth, but, along with the festivities which accompanied them, also played a role in royal ‘largesse’:

La largesse est une condition essentielle de l'équilibre du royaume d'Arthur. On la retrouve partout, des romans en vers de Chrétien de Troyes aux Continuations ou au cycle en prose. Elle y apparaît sous deux formes, d'ailleurs très traditionnelles: l'organisation de fêtes somptueuses et le don royal.<sup>38</sup>

The king's generosity towards his subjects played an essential role in the life of the royal court: *largesse* ‘refers to the king's general function as provider of adventures as well as goods, shelter, food and justice’.<sup>39</sup> In this wide sense, it applies to more or less everything which Arthur is failing to do as king and host – he is failing to inspire adventure by ignoring the requests for help, he leaves his guests without even offering any kind of hospitality, he is failing to encourage his knights or display his generosity by means of tournaments.

This lack of *largesse* is then certainly an indication that something is seriously awry. It also recalls Arthur's strange behaviour and the decline of his court at the beginning of the *Perlesvaus*.<sup>40</sup> There too, Arthur's condition was reflected in his lack of interest in *largesse*:

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a knight?’, *Medieval Knighthood V: Papers from the sixth Strawberry Hill Conference 1994*, ed. by Stephen Church and Ruth Harvey (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995), pp. 1-17.

<sup>37</sup> Edward Peters, *The Shadow King: ‘Rex Inutilis’ in Medieval Law and Literature 751-1327* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 171.

<sup>38</sup> Dominique Boutet, ‘Sur l'origine et le sens de la largesse arthurienne’, *Le Moyen Âge*, 89 (1983), 397-411, (p. 397).

<sup>39</sup> Peters, *The Shadow King*, p. 172.

<sup>40</sup> In the *Perlesvaus* (*Le Haut Livre du Graal: Perlesvaus*, ed. by William A. Nitze and T. Atkinson Jenkins, 2 vols (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932-37)) Arthur seems to suffer a bout of *melancholia* which has dramatic effects. At the very beginning of the romance, we meet an Arthur who is overcome by a ‘volantez delaienz’, a lack of the will to accomplish anything, an inertia, a lethargy of willpower which has led to his neglect of his kingly duties (*Perlesvaus*, ed. Nitze, i, pp. 25-26, ll. 67-71):

The cause of his loss of honor is the mysterious *volentez delaianz*, the opposite of the *volentez de fere largesce*. It is, in fact, a kind of negative willing which takes the form of inaction, and certainly, as far as the romance writers were concerned with the mental states of their characters, a psychological aberration'.<sup>41</sup>

Can we take the parallel further? Is Arthur in fact suffering some kind of *melancholia*, a form of *folie*, as he had in *Perlesvaus*?

Indeed, the parallel seems to be confirmed with Sagremor's next words. In the *Perlesvaus*, Arthur's *melancholia* had led to his being shunned by the hermit and refused entry to mass. Sagremor now outlines the similar reaction of Arthur's clergy towards him:

Ou sunt li capelain ki soloient aler environ vous, et li evesque, et li archevesque, et li abbet, et li autre prouvoire, et li prelat? Ciertes, il vous vont trestout fuiant quant vous entres en Sainte Eglyse.<sup>42</sup>

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Li rois Artuz fu .x. anz en tel point com ge vos di, ne n'estoit nus rois terriens tant loez comme il, tant que une volentez delaianz li vint, e commença a perdre le talent des largesces que il soloit fere. Ne voloit cort tenir a Noël, ne a Pasques, ne a Pentecoste.

Even his knights have begun to abandon him (*Perlesvaus*, ed. Nitze, i, pp. 25-26, ll.67-71):

Li chevalier de la Table Reonde, qant il virent son bienfet alentir, il s'en partirent e commencerent sa cort a lessier. De trois .c. e .lxx. chevaliers q'il soloit avoir en sa mesniee, n'avoit il ore mie plus de .xxv. plus.

Arthur seems aware of the situation, but is unable to do anything about it (*Perlesvaus*, ed. Nitze, i, pp. 25-26, ll.67-71):

Certes, dame, dist li rois, ge n'é volenté de fere largesce ne chose qui tort a honneur; ainz m'est mes talenz muëz en floibece de cuer, e par ce sé ge bien que ge per[t] mes chevaliers e l'amor de mes amis.

Something has engulfed him and removed all of his motivation. Not even the that most important of knightly virtues, honour, can inspire him to act. As Michel Zink argues ('Le rêve avéré: la mort de Cahus et la langueur d'Arthur du *Perlesvaus* à *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*', *Littératures*, 9-10 (Spring 1984), 31-38, (p. 32)), this behaviour suggests that Arthur is suffering depression, or *melancholia* as we saw in Chapter One (pp. 27-30):

L'auteur définit ce mal comme *une volentez delaianz*, un affaïsement de la volonté qui lui fait remettre sans cesse à plus tard ce qu'il doit faire, une sorte d'aboulie. L'expression n'a rien d'usuel. Dans le vocabulaire chevaleresque, l'auteur aurait pu employer le mot *recreance*, dans le vocabulaire religieux celui d'*accide*, cette négligence dans l'accomplissement de ses devoirs qui a plus tard été remplacé par la paresse dans la liste des péchés capitaux. Mais il évite ce vocabulaire moral et il insiste au contraire sur le fait qu'Arthur est victime d'une maladie et qu'il souffre de son état. Les symptômes qu'il décrit rendent le diagnostic aisé. Le roi Arthur est atteint de dépression nerveuse.

<sup>41</sup> Peters, *The Shadow King*, p. 177.

<sup>42</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 211, 97Rb-97Va.

This rejection is the practical manifestation of the papal interdict placed on Arthur as a result of his rejection of the true Guinevere. It also recalls the strange observation that the four knights had made earlier when describing their visit to Arthur – that he had just returned from church, where bizarrely he had *not* heard mass.<sup>43</sup>

But instead of taking the opportunity of the confrontation with Sagremor to defend or explain himself, Arthur tries to shift the blame for the state of his court from himself onto those who have left him:

'Saigremors,' cou dist li rois, 'si ma grans cours est empirie, ele n'est pas empirie par moi  
seulement; mais mi compaignon en ont grans coupes.'<sup>44</sup>

He displays no interest in returning to his duties, and in fact seems very happy to continue to let Daguenet deputise for him:

Se Daguenes est sires de ma court, il m'est mout biel puis k'il doune a mangier a trestous  
ensi comme la coustume de court le requiert.<sup>45</sup>

His endorsement of Daguenet's work – hospitality which constitutes a part of the *largesse* which Arthur is lacking – concurs with the evidence provided by the accounts of the messenger, the four knights and Sagremor, who have all noted the high quality of service that Daguenet has been providing. Indeed, as far as hospitality goes, Daguenet seems to have fulfilled this role particularly well – always willing and eager to ensure that the guests to the court receive plenty of food, winning their praise for his courtliness and generosity. Although such hospitality is clearly an important part of court life, surely it is rather odd that Arthur's comment seems to be reducing the role of his court to the level of a mere hostel?<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> See note 12.

<sup>44</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 211, 97Va.

<sup>45</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, pp. 211-12, 97Va.

<sup>46</sup> See note 22. Daguenet's actions are ensuring the salvation of at least some of the honour which Arthur's apathy threatens, but at the same time, what Daguenet seems to be offering is only the bare

In fact, Arthur goes further than that. He seems to think that the ability to provide hospitality qualifies Daguenet to take over some more of the duties that Sagremor accused him of neglecting, even permitting him access to his treasury:

Et autresi vaurroie iou k'il mariast les orphenines dou tresor de ma chambre, et les chevaliers vaurroie iou k'il adoubast; et bien le pora faire car il est asses gentius hom.<sup>47</sup>

Arthur's praise of Daguenet as 'gentius hom' echoes that of the others who have encountered Daguenet, and described him a 'mout courtois' and 'mout biax parliers',<sup>48</sup> a very unfamiliar picture of this character. It is a further reminder that, although Daguenet has been described as a 'chevaliers foursenes' by both the messenger and the four knights who came looking for help at Arthur's court, there has so far been no evidence of *folie* in his behaviour. Indeed, it is Arthur and not Daguenet who is displaying questionable behaviour.

Arthur's apathy extends beyond the confines of the running of the court to a far more fundamental level, that of the defence of his realm. Although the messenger from the Count of Dover had already warned him of the impending threat of invasion by the Saxons, he now denies all knowledge of it:

'Dieus aide,' fait Saigremors li Desrehes, 'ne saves vous le grant destoubrier ki vous court seure?' 'Et quels destoubrier?' fait li rois Artus.<sup>49</sup>

Worse still, he rejects any responsibility to help:

'Sire,' fait Saigremors, 'li Saisne s'en vienent a Wincestre a si grant plente de paiens trestous li roiaumes de Logres en est en aventure se il vienent a Wincestre.' 'A Wincestre,' fait li rois Artus, 'si se desfendent en contre iaus, car ia ne metrai mon piet cele part.' Quant Saigremors oi cou, il commencha a plourer trop durement. Et lors s'en vait li rois en sa cambre et les laisse illuec.<sup>50</sup>

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minimum: he ensures everyone has enough to eat. So even with Daguenet as his replacement, Arthur is still failing to offer the level of hospitality described by Chênerie.

<sup>47</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 212, 97Va.

<sup>48</sup> See above, note 9.

<sup>49</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 212, 97Vb.

<sup>50</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 212, 97Vb.

Not only does the king have a duty to help defend his vassals at Winchester, but failing to do so places the rest of his kingdom at risk. By refusing even to go there himself to offer support, he again shows how his horizons do not currently stretch beyond the walls of his court, indeed, probably not much further than the walls of his room, to which he again retreats.

Upset with this negative response from the king, Sagremor immediately turns to Daguenet for help:

Daguenet, li Saisne s'en vienent a Wincestre; que en baes vous a faire?<sup>51</sup>

Strangely, Sagremor seems to make no hesitation in transferring his query from his king, Arthur, to the ‘chevaliers foursenes’,<sup>52</sup> Daguenet. Taking his lead from the king, it seems that in the eyes of Sagremor, Arthur’s abrogation of duty and responsibility onto Daguenet stretches beyond the duties to individual vassals – dubbing knights and marrying orphan girls – to include the defence of the realm.

But it is not only Sagremor’s readiness to accept Daguenet as in charge that is surprising. Without batting an eyelid, Daguenet not only responds to the question as if it were the most natural thing in the world that he should be asked to deal with such an important issue, but indeed he already has a plan worked out in his head. He provides the answer that should have come from Arthur, a carefully considered and chosen plan of action:

‘Sire,’ fait il, ‘iou ai en mes coffres roiaumes<sup>53</sup> les maaillies et les deniers por doner les soldees, dont iou vous di ke a l’endemain encommencerai iou a paier les soldoiers et les chevaliers ki vivent d’armes, et les autres hommes; et si ai mandet par tout le roiaume de Logres ke tout soient apareilliet petit et grant d’armes et de chevaux.’<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 212, 97Vb.

<sup>52</sup> This is how the messenger described Daguenet at the beginning. See note 8. The interesting irony lies in the fact that somehow the messenger seemed to know that Daguenet is *fou*, whilst there has been no evidence of this in his behaviour.

<sup>53</sup> Berthelot notes this should be ‘roiaus’ not ‘roiaumes’.

<sup>54</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 212, 97Vb.

Not only has he already devised this plan, but he has also begun to put it into action by ordering that the rest of the kingdom be similarly prepared.

The nature of this plan also again highlights the extent to which Arthur has been abandoned by his usual retinue of knights and companions. Under normal circumstances, he should be able to call upon his vassals to furnish their military service to him as their feudal lord. But his knights have all left his court, there is no one left upon whom to call to support him, and the only means of raising an army is to pay mercenaries: ‘les soldoiers et les chevaliers ki vivent d’armes.’<sup>55</sup> It is not loyalty, but financial gain which will motivate the troops which will defend the kingdom.

Daguenet also indicates here the continuing expansion of his responsibilities. Moving from his assertion that he was ‘senescaus et bouteilliers et counestables’, he seems to have assumed the role of treasurer. The terms in which he now refers to the treasury which are particularly significant. To call the treasury ‘mes coffres’ might seem a little presumptuous, but might be understood in the context of the role of treasurer, a further office of the court which Daguenet appears to be claiming for himself. But ‘mes coffres roiaumes’ surely indicates that the speaker considers himself to belong to the ranks of that royalty?

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<sup>55</sup> Mercenaries were used to bolster the ‘service d’ost’ offered by the vassals (Chênerie, *Le Chevalier errant*, p. 28):

Les liens du chevalier errant seront moins complexes avec le *soudoier*, ce chevalier soldé, attesté dans le domaine anglo-normand dès la fin du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle, qui recevait un salaire pour assurer une campagne militaire, dont l’emploi doubla les ressources du service d’ost de quarante jours dû au suzerain, avant de le remplacer complètement.

As we can see, the significance here is that Arthur does not appear to have any other means of raising an army, as his court is deserted by his knights. For more on mercenaries, see Philippe Contamine, *La Guerre au moyen âge* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1980), pp. 192-207, ‘L’argent, les services soldés, le mercenariat’.



This suspicion is confirmed with Daguenet's next words. On hearing what Daguenet has done, Sagremor is very impressed with the preparations. He is fulsome in his praise for him, praise which particularly highlights the contrast between Daguenet's efforts and the failure of Arthur to act:

'Par Sainte Crois,' fait Saigremors, 'vous en aves tant fait ke vous en devez estre loes de toutes pars et li roi blasmes.'<sup>56</sup>

But Daguenet's response to this compliment is both shocking and puzzling. First, he rebukes Sagremor for even mentioning the king:

'Taisies vous,' fait Daguenes, 'ne tenes parlement a lui car il est a moi.'<sup>57</sup>

Why does he react so negatively to the mention of his king? The curious little phrase he uses to justify himself does not enlighten us. What does he mean - 'il est a moi'? In what way does Arthur belong to him, that the king is somehow in his power? Is he referring to the fact that Arthur seems more than happy to hand over his duties and responsibilities to Daguenet, and that therefore Daguenet has some kind of power or control over him? Is it perhaps indicating that in the light of Arthur's present apathy he is not even worth talking about, since Daguenet is managing to sort out whatever Arthur cannot? Is it an extension of the narrator's earlier puzzling comment that the court was 'a Daguenet'?

Daguenet's next comment appears to elaborate on this:

Il m'a doune le roiaime apries sa mort: iou em porterai couroune, car il ne vivra longement.<sup>58</sup>

Daguenet seems to be saying that Arthur is 'his' because he has chosen Daguenet as his successor, and, as the king will not survive long, he might as well be forgotten. If what he says about Arthur's failing health is true, then it may provide him some justification. But the idea alone that Arthur is dying and has passed his kingdom to

<sup>56</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 212, 97Vb.

<sup>57</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 212, 97Vb.

anyone, particularly Daguenet, ‘chevaliers foursenes’, is so shocking that it is difficult to believe. Granted, in his conversation with Sagremor, Arthur indicated that he was happy to pass some of his tasks onto Daguenet, but there was no mention of passing over his entire kingdom, even after his death. The king’s behaviour may indeed be rather out of character, but nothing has so far hinted that he is close to death.

Is this claim perhaps the first sign of the *folie* which has been attributed to Daguenet, but of which there has so far been no evidence? Although both the messenger and the four knights described Daguenet as ‘chevaliers foursenes’, their accounts of his behaviour gave no reason to believe that Daguenet is truly *fou*. Is his assertion that Arthur is going to die and has made him his heir the beginnings of a delusion of *folie*?<sup>59</sup> In normal circumstances, such a claim would surely be dismissed as such.

What is particularly unsettling, however, is that there should be any question of taking this claim seriously. In the light of the recent confusing and contradictory state of affairs, we can no longer be sure of what to believe of anyone, especially the king. Whilst our immediate conclusion would be to dismiss Daguenet’s words as *folie*, it is not possible to discount the idea that it is a sign of the *folie* of the king rather than his ‘fol’, and that Arthur has indeed bequeathed his kingdom in this way.

Until this point, the only people we have encountered are those who are at the heart of the situation, Arthur, Sagremor and Daguenet. Now, for the first time we get an outsider’s view. While Sagremor and Daguenet are talking, Gauvain and his brother Mordret arrive at court with an army of knights. Daguenet is overjoyed at the

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<sup>58</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 212, 97Vb.

<sup>59</sup> Galen notes that delusion was a common symptom of *mania* and *melancholia*. See Chapter One, notes 51 and 59.

arrival of these troops, and immediately tries to recruit them to fight for him at Winchester:

Sire, puis que vous estes venus, iou voel que vous en ales a Wincestre en la compaignie de maint pseudoume; et iou en donrai les soldees a vos chevaliers se il les veulent prendre.<sup>60</sup>

Gauvain's immediate response to this proposal is laughter:

Et lors commence me sire Gauvains a rire et dist: 'Daguenes, estes vous connestables?'<sup>61</sup>

This is particularly significant because this is the first example of laughter since the episode began. As we have seen, particularly in the prose *Tristan* and the prose *Lancelot*, Daguenet's appearance is frequently associated with laughter at his bizarre ideas and antics. Gauvain is laughing because he finds the idea that Daguenet is in charge of the arrangements for battle ridiculous: he is treating Daguenet in the way with which we are familiar from Daguenet's previous appearances.

But Gauvain's laughter is particularly poignant precisely because such circumstances do not apply. In the strange world in which we now find ourselves, Daguenet is indeed capable of performing these duties, and of doing them well. The author uses Gauvain to express the doubts raised in the mind of the audience, who identify with his disbelief in Daguenet's apparent change of role and of personality.

Gauvain humours Daguenet, agreeing to his suggestion that Daguenet pay his troops to fight for Arthur:

'Oil, sire,' dist Daguenes. ' Puis que vous l'estes,' fait me sire Gauvains, 'mal dehait aie iou se ia par moi en estes ostes. A l'endemain me soit dounee la soldee. Car on me va contant ke li Saisnes viennent a Wincestre.'<sup>62</sup>

But Gauvain clearly does not accept that Daguenet is in charge, as the next day, whilst this plan is being carried out, Gauvain takes the opportunity to confront his

<sup>60</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 212, 98Ra.

<sup>61</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 212, 98Ra.

<sup>62</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 212, 98Ra.

uncle, King Arthur. Just as Sagremor had before him, he tries to elicit from Arthur his plans to tackle the threat from the Saxons:

'Sire, que baes vous a faire? Li Saisne vous vienent veoir.' 'Se il vienent cest part, fait li rois Artus, iou deffendrai bien ceste vile, entre moi et mes amis.' 'Aves vous nul amit?' fait messire Gauvains. 'Oil, asses,' fait li rois Artus.<sup>63</sup>

Arthur's response, although still negative, perhaps shows a slight development in his attitude. At least he now shows he is willing to defend his own court against the invaders. However, it also demonstrates that he is either completely unaware of the truly parlous state of his court, or his words are meant as a sop to pacify Gauvain. Arthur claims to have friends enough to defend his court. But as Gauvain's question and as the evidence of the narrative so far indicates, Arthur currently has *no* friends, no companions, upon whom he can rely to help him. His court is deserted and Daguenet must resort to recruiting mercenaries to send to Winchester. Is Arthur perhaps suffering some delusion which prevents him from seeing the true situation? Or is he in denial? Again, it is his sanity rather than that of Daguenet which is brought into question.

Arthur's refusal to see or deal with the truth angers Gauvain, and he storms from his uncle's presence:

Et lors en crolle me sire Gauvains la teste, et s'en ala de devant lui mout courouchies.<sup>64</sup>

and he too finally accepts that Daguenet is in charge. His troops are ready and waiting to depart for Winchester. All that they lack is the royal standard to carry at their head, without which they will not leave:

Sire, ou est li gonfanon roiaus? Certes sachies certainement que ia de chi ne departirons, se vous ne le faites porter devant nos.<sup>65</sup>

Gauvain's reply is that Arthur cannot oblige, and indicates that it is to Daguenet that they should now turn for leadership:

<sup>63</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 212, 98Ra.

<sup>64</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, pp. 212-13, 98Ra.

Seignour, li rois Artus n'est pas en boin memoire, la court est a Daguenet.<sup>66</sup>

His words take us straight back to the very beginning of the whole episode, when the narrator informed us that 'la cours estoit a celui point a Daguenet'.<sup>67</sup> Gauvain's intervention has added little new to our knowledge of the situation. Instead, by reflecting the doubts and concerns of the audience in the reaction of this knight to the situation he is confronted with at Arthur's court, the author uses Gauvain to reinforce its incongruity. When Gauvain arrived, he merely humoured Daguenet, which would have been the appropriate response to Arthur's 'fol' under normal circumstances, and which the audience would have expected. However, with his outsider's eye, Gauvain proves to us that we are not wrong to be puzzled by what we see. Things at court are certainly not as they should be.

Gauvain's words also return to the recurrent underlying question-mark against Arthur's sanity. On the one hand, Daguenet's behaviour has led us to doubt his *folie*. On the other, Arthur's behaviour is leading us to doubt his sanity. Gauvain too shows that he too has similar qualms. By describing Arthur as 'pas en boin memoire', he is indicating that Arthur is not quite himself, and for some reason is forgetting his duties as king. This is demonstrably the case, as we have seen. But this phrase is also particularly interesting in this context for its associations with *folie*. For both Tristan and Lancelot, 'memoire' has been used as we have seen, in conjunction with other collocations to indicate that they were *fous*.<sup>68</sup>

Gauvain and his troops now depart for Winchester, and the narrative departs from Arthur's court. We can now see how this episode has built upon the puzzling situation set out in the visitors' accounts. Arthur is definitely behaving

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<sup>65</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 213, 98Rb.

<sup>66</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 213, 98Rb.

<sup>67</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 166, 71Rb.

uncharacteristically, openly shunning his kingly duties and advocating passing them over to another. That other is his ‘fol’, who too is acting against expectations. Instead of being the focus of amusement and entertainment, Daguenet now seems to be running the court, perhaps even taking over from the king. And whilst there is little sign of Daguenet’s *folie*, it is again Arthur’s sanity which is being questioned.

Is this apparent reversal of roles perhaps symptomatic of a wider theme - that of the ‘world upside-down’ topos?<sup>69</sup> Arthur’s court does seem to be a world in which

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<sup>68</sup> As we saw in Chapter One (esp. pp. 42 ff.).

<sup>69</sup> For a description and illustration of this topos in medieval literature, see E.R.Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter*, 3rd edn (Bern: Francke, 1961; first publ. 1948), pp. 104-08, ‘Verkehrte Welt’, which indicates that the topos would be a familiar one to the medieval reader. There are two particularly striking examples of the use of this topos in medieval French literature. In David J. Shirt’s article, ‘*Le Chevalier de la Charrete*: A World Upside Down?’, *Modern Language Review*, 76 (1981), 811-22, Shirt argues convincingly that ‘the author repeatedly has recourse to a particular literary device, the inversion or ‘World Upside Down’ topos, with the express aim of conditioning the attitude of mind of his listener/reader should adopt when receiving and appreciating the remainder of the work’ (p. 811). He describes in detail the ways in which the social hierarchy of the Arthurian court is turned on its head in order to create an unreal world where the illicit love affair between Guinevere and Lancelot is acceptable (p. 818):

There seems little doubt, then, that the Arthurian overture to the *Charrete* takes the form of an inversion of the anticipated fictional and feudal norm. The traditional superiority and fixity of Arthur’s rule is completely overturned, producing anarchy and chaos; the social hierarchy is reversed and a rather nightmarish fantasy ensues in which the characters act in a manner which is the opposite of what could normally be expected.

This Upside Down World that Shirt describes is very similar to what we are seeing in the *Prophécies* – familiar characters behaving in unfamiliar ways. This topos is also used in another contemporary work – *Aucassin et Nicolette*. Written in the early thirteenth century in mixture of song and prose, it is a love story which tells of the trials through which two young people go in order to be together. One of the lands they visit on their travels is Torelore, where everything seems to be upside down. The king is confined in childbirth, and the queen is out leading the armies to war. This exaggerated reversal of gender stereotypes reflects the unusual relationship of the lovers, where Nicolette is portrayed in the role of the courtly lover usually attributed to the man. As Sister M. Faith McKean notes (‘Torelore and Courtoisie’, *Romance Notes*, 3 (1962), 64-68, (p. 67)), this ‘*reductio ad absurdum*’ should cause the lovers to realise their own situation, but ‘their failure to appreciate the analogy of their situation with that of the royal couple makes the irony of subsequent events all the funnier, for with the Saracen attack and their forced departure from Torelore all reverts to the

‘the anticipated stereotype has been reversed’.<sup>70</sup> It seems that the king’s decision to accept the False Guinevere in the place of the true queen has resonated throughout his court. It was that decision which turned the world on its head, which is reflected in the fact that the king and ‘fol’ seem to have swapped places. It is the king’s *folie* which is the focus against the contradictory background of Daguenet’s sanity. As Fritz notes:

[Arthur’s] premier geste de folie a été de prendre le faux pour le vrai et le vrai pour le faux, lorsqu’il a chassé la vraie Guenièvre de son royaume.<sup>71</sup>

With the False Guinevere as queen, are we seeing a False Arthur as king, and a False Daguenet as ‘fol’, where Arthur’s court is now ‘a Daguenet’? Is the author reflecting this reversal of right and wrong onto the court at large?

Some seventeen folios after the departure of Gauvain and his troops, the narrative returns to Arthur and his court. During this interval, the Saxon fleet arrives at Winchester, where Galehout and Lancelot meet them. A brief naval battle ensues, until Galehout decides to allow the Saxons to land and gives them time to prepare themselves for battle.

Until now, the topsy-turvy situation at court, albeit strange and unsettling, has been fairly harmless. Arthur’s withdrawal from court life had been compensated for

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previous courtly love pattern’. Here it is not the behaviour of familiar characters which is turned on its head, but the main characters enter temporarily into an entirely separate world where stereotypes are reversed. See: *Aucassin et Nicolette: édition critique* ed. by Jean Dufournet (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1973); Roger Pensom, ‘Form and Meaning in *Aucassin et Nicolette*’, in *Littera et Sensus: Essays on Form and Meaning in Medieval French Literature presented to John Fox*, ed. by D.A. Trotter (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1989), pp. 63-72; Roger Pensom, *Aucassin et Nicolette: The Poetry of Gender and Growing Up in the French Middle Ages* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1999), esp. Chapter 15, ‘The Pregnant King’ (pp. 105-13); Darnell H. Clevenger, ‘Torelore in *Aucassin et Nicolette*’, *Romance Notes*, 11 (1970), pp. 656-65; Robert Harden, ‘Aucassin et Nicolette as Parody’, *Studies in Philology*, 63 (1966), 1-9; Moses Musonda, ‘Le thème du “monde à l’envers” dans *Aucassin et Nicolette*’, *Medioevo Romanzo*, 7 (1980), 22-36.

<sup>70</sup> Shirt, ‘*Le Chevalier de la Charrete: A World Upside Down?*’, p. 815.

to a large extent by Daguenet's willingness and capability in offering the hospitality and help that is missing. He has entertained guests, offered himself as champion, and organised troops to go to Winchester. Both Sagremor and Gauvain have demonstrated satisfaction that, in the face of the king's apathy, they could turn to Daguenet instead.

But this next episode marks a distinct change of tone. From virtually no mention of Daguenet's insanity, we are plunged straight into a situation where this *folie* is vividly illustrated, a *folie* which is repeatedly reinforced by the proliferation of other textual references to the subject.

The episode opens as Daguenet and Sagremor have divided up the contents of the treasury amongst the mercenaries so thoroughly that there is nothing left:

Or dist li contes que entre Daguenet et Saigremor orent dounet la soldee que as chevaliers  
que as hommes a piet ki vivoient par armes, si sagement et si biel.<sup>72</sup>

Suddenly, Arthur's treasurer appears:

Quant li tresoriers dou roi i fu venus, il ne trouva dedens cele cambre une seule maaile.<sup>73</sup>

Seeing that the treasury is empty, he grows angry and turns on Daguenet:

Ha! Caitis foursenes, pour quoi ne mesis tu main en la couroune dou roi Artu?<sup>74</sup>

The appearance of the treasurer is particularly puzzling. There has been no preparation for it, no mention of this character anywhere previously in this romance.<sup>75</sup> Where was he whilst Daguenet devised and carried out his plan to spend the money in the treasury? Why was the treasurer not there to stop them? If, like the other officers, the seneschal, butler and constable, he had left the court, why has he now suddenly returned? These questions, although puzzling, are left unanswered.

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<sup>71</sup> Fritz, 'Daguenet, ou le bouffon amoureux', p. 54.

<sup>72</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 242, 115Ra.

<sup>73</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 242, 115Ra.

<sup>74</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 242, 115Ra.

<sup>75</sup> Or anywhere else. See below, note 84.



It is the treasurer's exclamation, 'caitis foursenes', which first reintroduces the subject of Daguenet's *folie*. It may be simply an angry exclamation, an insult with no meaning beyond the venting of the treasurer's annoyance. However, aimed at Daguenet, the significance of this reference to *folie* cannot be ignored. The treasurer's question is also interesting. It too is meant as an insult – under normal circumstances purloining the king's crown would surely be beyond even the maddest of fools. But these are not normal circumstances, and Daguenet's brazen response shows that he is either as *fou* as the treasurer seems to believe or simply very bold:

Et lors dist Daguenes que se il l'eust trouvee, jamais li rois Artus ne l'eust portee sour son chief.<sup>76</sup>

On a literal level, this exchange is a war of words. The treasurer is shocked that the money that he guards has all been spent by a knight he knows to be *fou*. His reaction is to hurl angry abuse. But this exchange may have a further level of irony. In many ways, Daguenet *has* already taken the king's crown in all senses *but* donning it physically. He has even stated that he has been promised the crown by Arthur. So when Daguenet replies that if he had found it, he would not have allowed Arthur to wear it, perhaps he is speaking the truth, both literally and metaphorically. Perhaps he would indeed have taken it to add to the riches of the treasury to pay the soldiers. But maybe he also would gladly both take the crown and his kingdom of which it is a symbol from Arthur himself. Is this *folie* or simply the pragmatic attitude of an ambitious knight?

Whilst the words of the treasurer's insult first reminded us of Daguenet *folie*, it is Daguenet's own actions which are about to bring that *folie* to life. Angered by Daguenet's bold response, the treasurer threatens him with a stick. In response,

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<sup>76</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, pp. 242-43, 115Ra.

Daguenet takes up his opponent's own sword from its sheath and brings it down on the treasurer's head with such strength that it splits him in two down to his stomach:

Et quant Daguenes vit cou, il se lance a la traverse et prist une espee ki pendoit a .i. croc de fer enmi la sale, et cou estoit li espee meismes dou tresorier[...] Et Daguenes giete erramment son cop, et fiert le chevalier amont desour le chief, si le vait tout pourfendant iusques a la poitrine.<sup>77</sup>

This attack is clearly a disproportionate and extreme reaction to the situation, and there can be little doubt that this is an act of *folie*. If nothing else, it breaks with the chivalric code of equal combat.<sup>78</sup> The treasurer, although clearly a knight as he is carrying a sword in the first place, now wields only a stick and hardly poses a threat worthy of such a violent death.

This incident also places Daguenet firmly within his own brief literary tradition, providing the first confirmation that, although until this point there was little evidence of *folie*, the character we are dealing with is indeed the same *fou* knight whom we have met in earlier romances. The parallels between this scene and previous incidents involving Daguenet indicate both that the author was well aware of his history, and that he wished to indicate to the attentive reader that he is using the same character.

These parallels link together this encounter with Daguenet's appearances in both the *Tristan* and the *Guiron*. The first is the nature of the incident itself. The frenzied attack on the treasurer recalls the attack on the shepherds in *Tristan* and on Helior in *Guiron*. Daguenet attacks the treasurer because he is threatened with a stick, a threat which hardly justifies the treasurer's subsequent violent death. Similarly, in *Tristan*, Daguenet's reaction to the apparent taunts of the shepherds is wholly disproportionate both to their provocation and to the fact that they were

<sup>77</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 243, 115Ra.

<sup>78</sup> See Chapter Three, note 22.

unarmed. Daguenet's attack on Helior in the *Guiron* is slightly different in that we are later given a justification for Daguenet's behaviour, but the initial impression is still that of disproportionate violence without mercy.

Excepting this later justification of the attack on Helior, it is with the episode in the *Guiron* that the author of the *Prophécies* seems to draw most parallels. There are two main points of comparison. First is the motif of the stolen sword. Daguenet attacks the treasurer with the treasurer's own sword, which Daguenet had retrieved from where it was hanging: 'ki pendoit a .i. croc de fer enmi la sale, et cou estoit li espee meismes dou tresorier.'<sup>79</sup> In *Guiron*, Daguenet, naked and unarmed, similarly takes up Helior's own sword against him.<sup>80</sup> This motif of the stolen sword can also be traced back to the *Tristan*, where the tables are turned slightly as the *fou* Tristan takes the sword of the senseless Daguenet in order to pursue the fleeing squires.<sup>81</sup>

As if to corroborate these parallels, the narrator reveals that this is not the first time that Daguenet's temper has displayed itself in this way. Sagremor is aware that Daguenet is capable of such outbursts. In fact, this knowledge prompts him to get out of Daguenet's way:

Et quant Sagremors ki estoit em pur le cors, et ki bien savoit que Daguenes estoit tous  
forsenes quant il estoit courouchies, vit cou, il se lance a la traverse.<sup>82</sup>

Again, we encounter the ambiguous use of 'forsenes' to describe Daguenet's behaviour. The treasurer used it as an insult against Daguenet's use of the treasury. Sagremor uses it here to describe the violence of Daguenet's temper when angered. But in the light of this violent attack, they also both remind the audience of the *folie*

<sup>79</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 243, 115Ra.

<sup>80</sup> See Chapter Four, p. 138

<sup>81</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, §170, ll.25-33, pp. 250-51. See Chapter Three, pp. 114 ff.

<sup>82</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 243, 115Ra.

with which Daguenet is associated elsewhere, and of which this incident seems finally to provide proof.

It is in the midst of establishing Daguenet's *folie* that the narrator now chooses to reveal the rather interesting name of his victim:

Li tresoriers avoit a non Foles.<sup>83</sup>

It is difficult to imagine that the name of the treasurer is merely coincidental to the prevailing context of *folie*. No one with this name is to be found in any of the other prose romances,<sup>84</sup> and the parallel with Daguenet's oft used sobriquet 'li fols' is hard to ignore. The most blatant irony is of course that it is Fole who seems to be the only one acting sanely at this point – it is surely reasonable that he should be angry that the entire contents of his treasury have disappeared. This irony also reinforces this increasing awareness of the presence of *folie* in this episode, thus confirming and emphasising the increasing awareness of the presence of Daguenet's own *folie*.

But whilst this violent incident and the other various reminders begin to re-establish Daguenet's *folie* in the mind of the audience, it appears to have no effect upon the opinion of the ordinary people of Arthur's court. Instead of being shocked and horrified by this grizzly deed, it only seems to increase their loyalty to Daguenet. When the treasurer's relatives hear what has happened, they rush en masse to the palace to confront Daguenet, but the people of the town do not even let them climb the stairs:

Quant il[Fole's relatives] sorent la nouvele, il saillirent trestout as armes et coururent mout durement vers le palais; mais li peules ne lor sueffre mie que il montent les degres ne que il metent main a Daguenet, ains lor dient que il metent Folet en terre et soient en pais.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>83</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 243, 115Rb.

<sup>84</sup> West notes that this is the only appearance of Fole in the prose romances. G.D. West, *An Index of Proper Names in French Arthurian Prose Romances* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), p. 115.

<sup>85</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 243, 115Rb.

Their unquestioning loyalty to Daguenet is epitomised in their defence of him. They tell Fole's relatives that his death was his own fault, as Daguenet was merely defending himself against attack, and that even if he had killed Arthur, they would not let anyone lay a finger on Daguenet:

Car se Daguenes eust ochi le roi Artu meismes, a cestui point, il ne souffriroient mie ke nus mesist main en lui, et ke se Foles est mors, il est mors par sa coupe; car Daguenes deffendi son cors que il ne l'ocesist.<sup>86</sup>

This remarkable reaction is surely further evidence of the upside-down nature of this world, and that its topsy-turvy effect stretches beyond the relationship between Arthur and Daguenet to the court as a whole?<sup>87</sup> How can it possibly be said that Fole was responsible for his own death when he wielded only a stick against Daguenet and a sword? Surely justice is being turned on its head if a murderer is to be protected against the wrath of his victim's relatives, who are quite rightly outraged by the death of their kin? The epitome of this bizarre attitude is the assertion that their reaction would have been the same if it had been Arthur he had killed.

Somehow, even Fate appears to favour Daguenet. Fole's relatives demand the return of his gold and jewels. Realising that they had already spent the contents of Fole's own coffers, Sagremor and Daguenet decide instead to give them Arthur's

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<sup>86</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 243, 115Rb.

<sup>87</sup> This collective reaction seems to belong to a phenomenon identified by Ménard (*Le Rire et le sourire*, p. 300):

Nous avons affaire à des phénomènes de foule, à des manifestations significatives de la mentalité collective. Elles ne sont certainement pas nées de l'imagination des romanciers courtois, mais ressemblent à des 'choses vues', à des coutumes traditionnelles. La foule qui assiste à une joute n'aime pas voir la prompte déconfiture ou la couardise d'un combattant. Elle est alors frustrée dans ses espérances. De plus, elle se sent solidaire du vainqueur, elle tient le vaincu pour un être déshonoré, presque pour un coupable. Elle le méprise presque autant que le champion vaincu en duel judiciaire, réprouvé par Dieu et maudit par les hommes. La foule, sûre de sa force, persuadée de son bon droit, poussée par un besoin de justice sommaire et primitif et par le malin plaisir d'humilier un 'coupable' tient elle-même couvrir d'opprobre celui qu'elle rejette de son sein.

The irony here is that, although the crowd is reacting as Ménard describes, they are in fact condoning an act of summary *injustice*.

crown instead. Sagremor proposes the plan and Daguenet and Sagremor go in search of it:

Soit dounee la couroune dou roi au lignage Folet pour .ccc. mars iusques a tant que il lor  
seront dounet, et il vous iueront boine pais a tousiours mais.<sup>88</sup>

During this search, they come across a small hidden door, behind which they discover yet more treasure:

Et lors entrerent en une petite cambre. Daguenes et Saigremors sachent l'uis apries iaus.  
Si vous di vraiment ke illuec trouverent le grant tresor ki jadis fu de Bertelais, que Mierlins  
le Sages fist caoir es mains le roi Artu, ensi com aves oi cha en arriere en nostre conte; et  
sachies vraiment ke li rois Artus n'en prist onques ne despendi une seule maaile pour nul  
besoing que il eust.<sup>89</sup>

Arthur had been saving this to pay for the defence against the Saxons, but because he had failed to organise such a defence, had spent none of it. Discovering this treasure gives Daguenet another opportunity to succeed where Arthur had failed. He uses the treasure first to compensate Fole's family, then to pay more mercenaries:

Maintenant prist Saigremors .iii. cens mars d'argent et les douna au lignage dou tresorier,  
et fist Daguenes maintenant crier le ban que tout viegnent prendre la soldee, car ele sera  
donee maintenant.<sup>90</sup>

This sudden change in tone again raises the question of Daguenet's *folie*, and the author sounds a note of warning. The violence and undeniable injustice of this incident involving Fole shocks the audience out of the complacency engendered by the apparent lack of negative consequences of the reversal of roles. This is not a satisfactory solution to the king's predicament, and threatens the fragile balance of justice at court.

In the midst of this, Yvain arrives at court. His arrival parallels Gauvain's earlier short sojourn, as Yvain is apparently unaware of the extent of the topsy-turvy

<sup>88</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 243, 115Va.

<sup>89</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 243, 115Va.

<sup>90</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 244, 115Va.

nature of the relationships at court. Asking for news of the king, Yvain is told that Arthur is in a kind of limbo:

Il ne counoist ne bien ne mal, il ne counoist honnour ne honte.<sup>91</sup>

The king, ultimate dispenser and symbol of justice, ‘grand justicier’,<sup>92</sup> is no longer able to tell right from wrong, nor even honour from shame, the most basic tenets of chivalry. Neglecting his duties, he fails to maintain the honour of his position, whilst he seems also to be oblivious of the shame which his inactivity brings upon himself and his court.

Yvain then asks for news of Gauvain, and learns that he and his troops had departed for Winchester under the royal standard. Yvain takes this as a sign that Arthur has not entirely forgotten himself and his role, until he is told that in fact it was Daguenet who handed over the standard:

‘En non Diu,’ fait mesire Yvains, ‘puis que li rois Artus li en donna le gonfanon roial, adont a il encore en lui aucune boines memoires.’ ‘Sire,’ font il, ‘onques ne s’en entremist, ains le dona Daguenes li Fols a cestui chi, ki tout gouverne.’<sup>93</sup>

Once again, Daguenet’s role as Arthur’s replacement is reiterated, but now with a slight twist. As we have seen, the beginning of this second episode contained clear references to Daguenet’s *folie*, in the form both of his behaviour towards Fole and other verbal reminders within the text. And here for the first time we have Daguenet referred to as ‘li Fols’. This sobriquet is one with which we are familiar from his appearances in other texts, but which has so far been omitted from this one, despite the fact that Daguenet was described very early on as ‘chevaliers foursenes’. Yet again, the topsy-turvy nature of this situation is brought into stark relief. On the one hand, the question of Daguenet’s *folie* is again reiterated, whilst on the other we witness how this ‘fol’ has been able to take on the role neglected by the king.

<sup>91</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 244, 115Vb.

<sup>92</sup> ‘D’abord, le roi est grand justicier, personnellement’, Petit-Dutaillis, *La Monarchie féodale*, p. 264.

Yvain response to this news is very interesting. His curse is directed towards evil women, and although he does not specify, he is again making reference to the malign influence of one woman in particular – the False Guinevere:

Certes on devroit ardoit les mauvaises femmes.<sup>94</sup>

Just as Gauvain had before him, Yvain now turns to Daguenet to ask him face to face if what he has heard about Daguenet's new roles is true:

'Daguenet,' fait il, 'on me vait contant que vous estes bailluis dou roiaime de Logres; dites moi, se Dius vous saut, se il est voirs ou non?'<sup>95</sup>

But this time it is Daguenet, not the questioner, who laughs. He appears to find such an enquiry amusing, given the number of other responsibilities he has taken on, and which he now lists:

Me sire Yvains, iou sui rois, bailluis, et counestables, et tresoriers, veoir le poes.<sup>96</sup>

These are to be added to the 'bouteillier' and 'senescaus' of the earlier list. In his own mind, Daguenet has now assumed most of the official roles involved in running the court. His laughter here contrasts with that of Gauvain in the previous episode. Gauvain was amused at the idea that Daguenet, Arthur's 'fol', had assumed such airs and graces that he claimed to be 'counestable'. The truth was of course that Daguenet had proved himself more than equal to the task, a fact which Gauvain accepted when he announced that the court was 'a Daguenet'. The boot is now on the other foot, as it is Daguenet's turn to laugh at the fact that anyone could doubt his position at court.

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<sup>93</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 244, 115Vb.

<sup>94</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 244, 115Vb.

<sup>95</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 244, 115Vb. 'Bailluis' was an officer of the court, charged mainly with collecting the money on behalf of the king (Petit-Dutaillis, *La Monarchie féodale*, p. 275):

Une des fonctions les plus importantes des baillis et des sénéchaux est de procurer de l'argent au roi.

<sup>96</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 244, 115Vb-116Ra.



Daguenet's words also mark a development from the previous episode. Daguenet had claimed that Arthur had made him heir to the throne, in the light of the his, Arthur's, imminent death. At the time, preposterous as the claim might have seemed, there was little other evidence of Daguenet's *folie*, and the strange behaviour of the king meant that Daguenet's words could not be dismissed out of hand.

Now, however, Daguenet claims that he is already king - 'iou sui rois'. Daguenet simply has not waited for Arthur to actually die before claiming what he believes to be his right. This claim appears to be outrageous, and surely a delusional symptom of the *folie* which has so carefully been pointed out to us in the recent narrative. He is certainly not the only *fou* to claim he is king.<sup>97</sup> Can we take this as a sign that Daguenet's *folie* is returning and that Arthur's sanity will do likewise?

The irony however remains that to all extents and purposes what Daguenet claims is now true. He has been responsible on practical level for maintaining the court more or less single-handedly: welcoming guests and providing hospitality; ensuring there is food for everyone; organising and sending troops to defend the kingdom against invaders. He also has the demonstrable support of the people of the court, who are willing to defend him above even Arthur. Gauvain and his troops accepted the royal standard from his hands. Daguenet is now the *de facto* king. The world has truly turned on its head.

Yvain, unlike Gauvain before him, seems to have little trouble accepting this, and greets him warmly:

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<sup>97</sup> In Adam de la Halle's *Le Jeu de la feuillée*, the *Dervés* declares 'Laissé me aler, car je sui rois' (Adam de la Halle, *Le Jeu de la feuillée*, ed. by Jean Dufournet (Gent: Éditions Scientifiques E. Story-Scientia, 1977), l.395).

Et lors l'embrace et Daguenes le baise maintenant.<sup>98</sup>

And just as he had done with Gauvain, Daguenet takes the opportunity to find out if Yvain has any mercenaries amongst his men who would be willing to accept his payment for service:

[Daguenet] Sire, sunt avoec vous venit aucun chevalier ki mestier aient de soldees?' 'Oil,' cou dist mesire Yvains. 'Faites prendre largement,' cou dist Daguenes, et lors commande ke on li doinst un coffre cargiet de maillies d'argent. Et cil li porta erranment a qui Daguenes l'ot commandet, car dounet li avoit en garde. Et mesire Yvains en fist donner as chevaliers ki avoec li estoient venit, a chiaus ki mestier en avoient.<sup>99</sup>

The upside down nature of the situation is reiterated even amongst the soldiers, as we are reminded that instead of loyalty or honour, it is money which will provide the motivation for the defence of this realm.

Despite his apparent acceptance of Daguenet, Yvain is not happy to leave the court without confronting Arthur. He too condemns Arthur for what he has become, underlining particularly his failure to defend his lands:

Ha! Sire, que estes vous devenus? On set par tout que li Saisne sont arme a Wincestre; et pour quoi n'i estes vous ales pour deffendre vostre terre?<sup>100</sup>

He tries to rouse Arthur from his apathy with calls on his duty to his illustrious forefathers, but to little effect:

Se vestres peres li rois Uterpendragons, dont Dius ait l'ame, en eust tant com vous avez fait quant li paien furent en Cornuaille et entour Camaalot, ja ne fust remes chastiaus e toute la Grant Bretaigne ke li paien n'eussent tout abatu, vraiment le sachiez vous. Sire, laissies ceste rage et venes deffendre vostre terre et vostre roiaume.<sup>101</sup>

Instead, Arthur again shifts the blame from himself to the companions who have left him:

Et mi compaignon et mes lignanges m'ont tout deguerpi, et quident tout vraiment ke iou soie dou tout pierdus.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>98</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 244, 116Ra.

<sup>99</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 244, 116Ra.

<sup>100</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 245, 116Rb.

<sup>101</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 245, 116Rb.

<sup>102</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 245, 116Rb.

Further to his defence, he recalls a prophecy which he claims that Merlin made to him which seems to fit the present situation:

'Rois Artus,' cou dist Mierlins, 'ichi sera vengie la mors de ton oncle Pandragon, et sachies ciertainement que a celui tans gouvernera ton regne uns foursenes, et ton roïame. Tu seras anoïentes et autreteus com se tu ne fuisses roi, et ti compaignon seront esgaret; mais iou t'en voel castoier ke tu te teignes a Ihesu Crist le Tout Poissant, ki bien t'en saura conseiller, et gouverner et aidier.'<sup>103</sup>

Arthur seems to present this prophecy as some kind of excuse or justification for his behaviour, as if he could not be held for events which were fated to happen. In fact, as Paton suggests, all this prophecy seems to achieve is to link this strand of narrative with the wider romance of the *Prophécies* by providing proof of the accuracy of Merlin's predictions.<sup>104</sup>

Even so, Arthur's attitude towards the invasion by the Saxons does seem to have developed slightly. Until now, his outlook has been very insular. He refused even to speak to the messenger who first brought news of the impending Saxon invasion, and when he was faced by Gauvain with the threat to his kingdom, stated that he would only defend his own town. Even the treasure Daguenet and Sagremor so recently found had been put aside for fighting the Saxons, but not spent. So when Yvain now tells him that the contents of Arthur's treasury have been used to pay the soldiers departing for Winchester, Arthur's reply is a surprise. He thoroughly endorses its use in the defence of his realm:

<sup>103</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 245, 116Va.

<sup>104</sup> This prediction is confirmed later on, as we shall see, by similar predictions claimed by Kay and Daguenet to have been made to them by Merlin. As Paton suggests, it seems to be a 'device of linking [the romance material] with the *Prophécies* by making Merlin predict the culminating events' (*Prophécies*, ed. Paton, ii, p. 275). It is notable that these occur only towards the end of the episode, thus describing events which have already happened, and serving no narrative purpose other than to reiterate what has occurred. Their principal role here seems to be to link this episode, which is nearing its conclusion, with the main concern of the text, Merlin's *Prophécies*.

'Adont vous plaist il bien,' cou dist mesure Yvains. 'Il ont dounet pour soldees tout vostre grant tresor.' 'Il m'est mout biel,' cou dist li rois Artus. 'Car mieus fait a despendre li tresors pour deffendre le roiaume ke laisser le amasse, si que pour defaute de tresor li paien aient la victoire desour vous, et presissent les viels et les chastiaus, et trouvaissent les tresors amasses.'<sup>105</sup>

Does this mark a renewed interest in life to parallel Daguenet's renewed *folie* - a move back towards normality?

Arthur's persisting endorsement of Daguenet as his deputy seems to convince Yvain that the discussion is over. As if to concede defeat, he indicates that he agrees that Daguenet is doing a good job and deserves any such praise:

'Ciertes,' fait mesure Yvains, 'puis que vous vous en acordes ensi del tout a Daguenet, il m'est mout biel; et il en a tant fait que bien font a loer ses oeuvres.'<sup>106</sup>

His encounter with the king now over, Yvain returns to Daguenet to tell him what the king said:

Si s'en retourne Yvains arriere a Daguenet et li giete les bras au col et dist: 'Daguenet, vous estes mout bien dou roi Artu.'<sup>107</sup>

Yvain passes on the king's endorsement of Daguenet's work, but these words, clearly meant positively towards Daguenet, evoke a very strange reaction. Daguenet laughs, and says that, should the king ever say anything against him, he will receive the same treatment as Fole:

Et Daguenest en commenche mout durement a rire et dist ke se il en parole encontre lui, il fera autretant de lui com il a fait de son tresorier. Et lors en commencent trestout a rire mout durement.<sup>108</sup>

Yvain too joins in this strange laughter, and promises not to cross him again:

Et lors en commencent a rire mout durement. 'Par Sainte Crois,' cou dist mesure Yvains, 'ia n'en parlerai enocntre vous, ne encontre vostre volente.'<sup>109</sup>

<sup>105</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 245, 116Va.

<sup>106</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 245, 116Va.

<sup>107</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 245, 116Va.

<sup>108</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 245, 116Va.

<sup>109</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, pp. 245-46, 116Va-Vb.

Yvain may be humouring him for Arthur's sake, but he spends the rest of that day and night with Daguenet before his departure the next day for Winchester:

Cestui iour et celi nuit fu me sire Yvains avoeques Daguenet, et mout l'aaisa Daguenet a son pooir. Et a l'endemain se leva me sire Yvains et monta sur son cheval, et se mist au cemin.<sup>110</sup>

Daguenet's laughter here is rather ambiguous. On the one hand, it is both inappropriate and sinister. He is asserting his authority over the king himself by threatening him with a violent death should he cross Daguenet. He seems to make light of the violent murder which he has so recently committed, surely a further sign of his *folie*? On the other hand, perhaps this laughter is not sinister at all, and Daguenet is merely treating Arthur's words in the dismissive way that Daguenet has experienced so many times himself.

Once Yvain has left, the focus of the narrative shifts slightly, and the False Guinevere is introduced to the narrative for the first time in person. Although her presence has been felt throughout the episodes so far as the ultimate cause of the whole situation, now we catch our first glimpse of the lady herself. She has just heard that in Galehout's absence at war the true Guinevere, the queen whom she is trying to usurp, is alive and well in the care of Arthur's nephew, Gaheriet. This news angers her greatly:

Or dist li contes que lors quant la nouvele fu venue a la fause Jenyevre ke Gaheries, li nies au roi Artu, estoit remes pour gouverner le roiaume de Sorelois ou ele savoit bien ke la roine Yenyevre estoit, ele fu tant courouchie ke ele commencha a plourer si durement com s'ele veist tout le monde mort devant li, si fust il souffissans cose.<sup>111</sup>

At this point, Gaheriet and another of Arthur's nephews, Agravain,<sup>112</sup> come to Arthur's court, seeking an audience with the king. In her anger, the False Guinevere

<sup>110</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 246, 116Vb.

<sup>111</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 246, 116Vb.

<sup>112</sup> There appears to be some confusion in the text as to whom Daguenet gave the keys to the treasury in London. Gaheriet and Agravain are named as those who arrive at court, and it seems to be to them

demonstrates the power she has over Arthur. Clearly fearing that they will bring news to Arthur of his wife, reminding him of what he has given up and perhaps endangering her own position at court, she swears that if he lets them in, she will kill herself. This has the desired effect, and the pair of knights are turned away:

Et quant la fausse Jenyevre oi ke il estoient li neveu dou roi Artu, ele iure quanque ele puet iurer ke se li rois lor oevre la porte, ke ele s'ocira maintenant de doel. Que vous diroie iou?  
Ele ne les vaut pas laisser ens.<sup>113</sup>

Just as so many before them, the rejection of Gaheriet and Agravain by the king immediately prompts them to seek out Daguenet, from whom they hope to get some of the money he has been handing out to the troops. Daguenet gladly agrees to help them, but, as the treasure at court is exhausted, he tells the knights they must go to London to collect the treasure which is kept there:

'Qu'est cou, biaux amis,' font il, 'nous voles vous donner de cestui argent?' 'Oil, a grant plente,' fait Daguenes; 'mais puis que vous estes venu andoi, il vous estuet aler iusques a Londres et iou vous donrai les cles dou grant tresor ki est en cele vile; car nouveies nous sont venues ke il i a maint preudome ki n'ont point d'armes ne de vitaille, dont il ne pueent aler a Wincestre.'<sup>114</sup>

Daguenet provides them with the relevant keys and seals, and they ride to London and obtain the money they need to finance their expedition. However, this move is Daguenet's first error of judgement, for when they find the treasure, whilst they do put some of it to the use for which it is intended - to arm and pay the mercenaries - they steal most of it for themselves:

Il prisent les cles et les letres seelees dou siel le roi Artu, et puis monterent et s'en vont iusques a Londres, et furent mout bien venu et furnirent bien, et l'un et l'autre, et tout cou pour quoi il estoient venu. Lors coururent li homme a piet et a cheval a iaus et il lor donnent les grands soldees; mais sachiez certainement que celui tresor ne fu pas si bien

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that Daguenet gives the keys initially. When the narrator notes that much of the treasure was stolen, he attributes this to 'doi neveu le roi Artu' (*Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 246, 117Rb), which description fits the aforementioned knights.

<sup>113</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 246, 117Ra.

<sup>114</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 246, 117Ra.

emploies ne sauves com cil fu que Dagueneu avoit a garder. Car cil doi neveu le roi Artu en  
 emblerent une grant partie et detinrent a lor oes, car molt estoient convoitex.<sup>115</sup>

Back at court, news of the true Guinevere and the arrival of Gaheriet and Agravain has had a serious effect on the False Guinevere. Fearing that her hold over the king is in danger, she is now busy persuading Arthur to leave his court and go with her to her home at Carmelide, from where she plans they will never return:

La fausse Jenyevre fu mout lie de cou ke il s'en voloit aler en Tarmelide avoec li. Et bien  
 quide certainement ke se ele le tenoit illuec, ke iamaiz ne s'en poroit retourner en celui  
 pais, ne en celui roiaume ou ele avoit prise la maladie.<sup>116</sup>

The illness that is mentioned is another direct link back to the tale as it is told in the prose *Lancelot*. The author of the *Prophécies* is referring to an illness which the False Guinevere suffered in the prose *Lancelot*:

Molt longuement dura la maladie si qu'en la fin maheigna et pui si durement, quant ele  
 comença a porrir, que nus ne la pooit soffrir.<sup>117</sup>

This illness marks the beginning of the end for the False Guinevere in the prose *Lancelot*. She deteriorates rapidly, and in her suffering finally confesses to Arthur the plan which she had hatched with Bertelais le Vieux to deceive the king.<sup>118</sup> For the discerning reader, the onset of this illness in the *Prophécies* will indicate that the power of the False Guinevere over Arthur has passed its peak, and this point must mark the beginning of its decline.

Just as Arthur is agreeing to leave with the False Guinevere, another visitor arrives at court. It is Kay, his seneschal, returning from his trip to Wales, where he had helped gather an army to send to Winchester. As we have already seen, Kay is

<sup>115</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 246, 117Ra-117Rb. It would appear that 'se' is missing from 'furnirent', although this is not remarked upon by Berthelot.

<sup>116</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 247, 117Rb.

<sup>117</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.1, IX, §6, p. 154. See Appendix Four.

<sup>118</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.1, IX, §26, p.163. See Appendix Four.

one of Arthur's most important barons and court officers,<sup>119</sup> and one of the first jobs which Daguenet had claimed for himself. When he arrives, the first people to greet him are Daguenet and Sagremor, and Kay's first words are in praise of Daguenet's work:

'Daguenes,' fit Keus li senescaus, 'molt court de vous boine renoumee; mout aves bien maintenue ceste court; les gens s'en vont mout loant de vous. Encore voel iou que vous soies en liu de moi.'<sup>120</sup>

Kay's praise shows that word of Daguenet's success has spread far. To this Kay adds his own personal stamp of approval. This is particularly significant for Daguenet, as it is the first time he has come face to face with someone whose job he has actually taken over. Instead of demanding his rightful place at court, Kay is so happy with Daguenet's work that he encourages him to continue in his stead. It is also particularly remarkable, as such positive praise is rarely forthcoming from the surly Kay.<sup>121</sup>

With this professional endorsement ringing in our ears, Daguenet is now led to a meeting with the holder of the most important post which he has laid claim to - that of the king himself. Throughout the episodes, Daguenet and King Arthur have been like ships in the night, never meeting, yet so closely bound together. Frequently, as we have seen, guests who have been shunned by Arthur turn almost seamlessly to

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<sup>119</sup> See note 25. On the subject of seneschals, and Kay in particular, see: Woledge, 'Bons Vavasseurs et mauvais sénéchaux'; Linda Gowans, *Cei and the Arthurian Legend*; Noble, 'Kay the Seneschal in Chrétien de Troyes and Predecessors'; Noble, 'The Heroic Tradition of Kei'; K.S. Whetter, 'Reassessing Kay and the Romance Seneschal', *Bulletin Bibliographique de la Société Internationale Arthurienne*, 51 (1999), 343-63; Chénierie, *Le Chevalier errant*, pp. 99-103.

<sup>120</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 247, 117Va.

<sup>121</sup> Is the nature of Kay's response further evidence of the Upside-Down world? As Ménard notes (*Le Rire et le sourire*, p. 457), Kay is well-known for his acerbic tongue which does not discriminate between friend and foe:

Il est notable que Keu ne lance pas seulement des sarcasmes aux étrangers qui arrivent à la cour d'Arthur, mais aussi fort souvent aux compagnons de la Table Ronde. Ses quolibets tiennent plus à son caractère acerbe qu'à sa fonction de sénéchal.



Daguenet to take his place. Daguenet, from the beginning, has seemed to appear at just the right moment, whether to offer food and hospitality or to put into action a plan to fight the Saxons. But the two have never met. The ‘fol’ who is playing king, and the king who is playing ‘fol’ have never faced each other.

Once Kay has greeted Daguenet and Sagremor, all three go the Arthur’s room.

When they knock, it is the king himself who opens the door to them:

Et lors li giete maintenant Keus li senescaus les bras au col, et s'en vont tout troi iusques a la cambre ou li rois Artus estoit. Il bouterent a la porte. Et li rois meismes lor ouevre la porte.<sup>122</sup>

His immediate reaction is to condemn Kay for abandoning him:

Keu, vous me deguerpesistes avoec les autres; ia ne m'ait Diex se iou sui iamais bien de vous.<sup>123</sup>

This sparks off an angry exchange of words, which finally ends with Daguenet’s intervention. Kay refutes Arthur’s accusation, stating that far from abandoning him, Kay had left court to gather an army:

‘Sire,’ fait Keus, ‘sauve vostre grasse, iou ne vous ai mie deguerpi ne laissiet, et si vous em puis bien moustrer la prueve; car a vostre besoing ai iou bien a conduit .iiii. mil homes, ke a iet, ke a cheval.’<sup>124</sup>

Arthur counters with the accusation that this had nothing to do with helping the king, but was motivated purely by the self-interest of the seneschal:

‘En ma besoigne ne les aves vous pas a conduis ne amenes,’ cou dist li rois, ‘mais en la vostre et pour garandir vos chastiaus et vos terres.’<sup>125</sup>

It is this attack which prompts Daguenet’s anger, and he turns on Arthur:

‘Adont est il rois de Logres,’ fait Daguenes. ‘Ciertes, biaux sire, vous aves pierdu le sens; vous n’iestes pas a vous, autres vous gouverne.’<sup>126</sup>

What Daguenet seems to be saying here is heavy with irony. In raising an army to defend his lands, which form part of Logres, Kay is performing a job which the king

<sup>122</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 247, 117Va.

<sup>123</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 247, 117Va.

<sup>124</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 247, 117Va.

<sup>125</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 247, 117Va.

himself should have undertaken. This therefore makes Kay more king of Logres than Arthur is currently managing to be.

It is the second part of his exclamation which is most significant: Daguenet, Arthur's 'fol', accusing Arthur of being *fou*. This accusation epitomises the relationship between the two throughout the episode so far. At every moment, it is Daguenet who has fulfilled the roles which belong to the king and his barons, whilst Arthur wallowed in the indolent apathy which has rendered him incapable of anything. This irony has until now been unspoken except by those brave enough to confront the king themselves, such as Sagremor, Gauvain and Yvain, and even they have eventually accepted the topsy-turvy nature of the situation. Now, however, Arthur can no longer hide behind the door of the room to which he so frequently retreats.

This head-to-head confrontation between king and 'fol' will surely finally serve to confirm or deny the reversal of roles which has been the running theme through the episodes. Perhaps Arthur, faced with the reality of his situation, will come to his senses. Instead, Arthur seems to agree with Daguenet, and submits to him completely:

'Daguenet,' fait li rois Artus, 'a vous n'ai iou que courouchier, anchois sui dou tout a vous.'  
'Ensi vous estuet parler,' cou dist Daguenes, 'se vous ne voles morir; car iou vous di bien ke autrement feroie iou de vous cou que iou ai fait de vostre tresorier, ke iou ochis par son parler.'<sup>127</sup>

Daguenet's strident response underlines this inversion of power. He is not afraid to inflict upon Arthur the same fate as Fole suffered for the crime of daring to question his authority. There can be no doubt this time that his threat is serious. But in recalling the incident with Fole, Daguenet is also recalling the clearest indication so

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<sup>126</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 247, 117Va.

<sup>127</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 247, 117Va-117Vb.

far of his *folie*, reiterating once again the irony of the reversal between the ‘fol’ and the king.

Arthur confirms his capitulation to Daguenet when Kay enquires what he will do next. The king has resolved to leave with his ‘wife’:

‘Sire,’ fait Keus au roi Artu, ‘que baes vous a faire?’ ‘Iou bee,’ fait li rois Artus, ‘a aler en Tarmelide avoec ma femme.’<sup>128</sup>

Kay seems to agree that, under the circumstances, he can do little to stop him:

Et lors embronche Keus li senescaus son vis et pense .i. petit, et puis respont au roi et dist: ‘Sire, puis ke il alers vous plaist, iou n'en puis mais.’<sup>129</sup>

On this note, Kay leaves the king, and turns once again to Daguenet. The conversation changes direction, as Kay reveals that Merlin once made a prophecy about him, in which he would lead the people of Wales to Winchester, and would find the wise made fools and the fools wise:

A celui tans que Mierlins parloit au roi ensi com iou vous di, me dist il que lors quant iou conduiroie le peule de Gales a Wincestre, trouverai iou les sages empiries et les fols amendes; ciertes akieeve est sa prophesie.<sup>130</sup>

Merlin’s description encapsulates the upside-down nature of the circumstances, again demonstrating the accuracy of predictions and providing a valuable narrative device linking together all of these events.

In his turn, Daguenet too has a prophecy from Merlin which appears to have been fulfilled:

‘Ha!’ fait Daguenes, ‘iou sai certainement ke vous l’aves gietee de sour moi; mais puis ke de sour Mierlin en estes arrestes, si vous dirai iou que il en avint si com il me dist .i. iour, et cou fu par devant le roi Artu meismes: “Daguenes, par vos oeures en sera secorus li fuis a la Jaiande a Wincestre, et delivres de grant meschief.” ‘En non Diu,’ fait Sagremors, ‘or en aves vous bien faites les oeures, car vous li aves envoiet si grant secours que asses en auront li paien a soustenir.’<sup>131</sup>

<sup>128</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 247, 117Vb.

<sup>129</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, pp. 247-48, 117Vb.

<sup>130</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 248, 117Vb.

<sup>131</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 248, 118Ra.

Instead of focussing directly on the reversal of roles between the king and the ‘fol’ as both Arthur’s and Kay’s had done, the prophecy given to Daguenet centres upon what he actually achieves as a result of this inversion. Daguenet has indeed helped ‘li fius a la Jaiande’ – Galehout – at Winchester by sending him paid troops to fight against the Saxons, thus saving Galehout and the kingdom as a whole. This demonstrates that whilst the ‘fol’ may have become king, his actions did not betray these roots, as he showed himself more than equal to the tasks which presented themselves.

With no further discussion of these prophecies, Kay, Sagremor and Daguenet, without any explanation, now go in search of the False Guinevere’s doctor. Finding him, Kay broaches the subject of the state of the king, and the doctor expresses his wish to help if he can:

‘Sire, vous saves bien a quoi li rois Artus est venus.’ Et il lor respont maintenant: ‘Ciertes, il m’en poise mout durement, se amender le peusse.’<sup>132</sup>

Kay then explains that Arthur is proposing to leave for Carmelide with the False Guinevere, and the doctor agrees to do what he can to stop them. He uses the illness mentioned earlier to persuade the False Guinevere to remain at court. He seeks her out, and she implores the doctor to accompany them to Carmelide. The doctor refuses, telling her that, if she leaves the court, she will be dead in three days, and he will have nothing more to do with her:

‘Taisies vous, dame,’ cou dist li sages mirres; ‘car se de chi vous departes, vous ne seres jamais lie; la mort em porteries dedens tierc jour. Se Dius m’ait, se vous plus en parles, jamais ne meterai main en vous.’ Alors se taist atant la fausse Jenyevre, ke plus n’en dist.<sup>133</sup>

In this way, it is engineered that the plan of the False Guinevere to lure Arthur away to Carmelide is foiled, and the pair remain where they are:

<sup>132</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 248, 118Ra.

<sup>133</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 248, 118Ra.

Ne li rois Artus n'en tient plus parlement d'aler en Tarnelide. Ensi fu deceus li rois Artus par le mirre et par Keu le seneschal. Et lors s'en retourne li mires arriere, et conte la nouvele a Keu e seneschal, dont il en fu mout ioians et mout lies.<sup>134</sup>

Having prevented their king from leaving court, and thus perhaps restoring a small amount of hope, Sagremor and Kay leave for Winchester in the company of more reinforcements:

Or a l'endemain monta Keus li senescax et conduist le peuple iusques a Wincestre. Et au tierc iour monta Saigremors li Desrees et conduist une compaignie, que de chevaliers, ke d'autres hommes a piet, iusques a Wincestre.<sup>135</sup>

But even away from court, Daguenet is not immediately forgotten. When he arrives at Winchester, Kay meets up with 'Beduier le counestable' and 'Lucan le bouteillier'.<sup>136</sup> The appearance of Beduier and Lucan is particularly significant, as, along with Kay, they are the holders of the three posts which Daguenet first claimed to be filling.

This is clearly no coincidence. The narrative brings us full circle, forming a chiasitic structure within which Daguenet's earliest claims to be fulfilling these roles are finally shown to have been true by the praise of the true title-bearers. When the messenger reported Daguenet's claim towards the very beginning, it seemed strange and unbelievable that Daguenet li Fols would be capable of fulfilling any of these posts on their own, let alone all three. Since that point, it has been demonstrated quite clearly that, contrary to expectation, he has matched up more than adequately to the challenge. He has even had the endorsement of the normally unforthcoming Kay.

<sup>134</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 248, 118 Ra-118Rb.

<sup>135</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 248, 118Rb.

<sup>136</sup> As the small number of references in West testifies (West, *An Index of Proper Names*, pp. 33 and 200), Beduier and Lucan appear quite infrequently in the prose romances. Thus their unexpected reappearance in this episode indicates a broad awareness on the part of the author of a variety of Arthurian characters.

Now it is the turn of the other two officers of the court to add their praise. A discussion strikes up about how Daguenet has performed their duties and more:

Illuec trouverent Beduier le counestable et Lucan le bouteillier, ki de lor pais avoient a conduit une grant compaignie de gent; mout tinrent grant parlement des oueures Daguenet et mout loerent cou que il en avoit fait, ke del mandement que il fist par tout le roiaume de Logres ke tout fuiscent apareilliet d'armes et de chevaus, et des soldees ke il avoit dounees ensi sagement com eust fait uns hom ki molt plus de lui fust renomes de grant sens.<sup>137</sup>

Compliments abound, and amongst the praise the irony of the situation is again reiterated. By describing Daguenet as performing the tasks 'sagement', and comparing him to someone 'de grant sens' the author pointedly reminds us that Daguenet is neither of these: he is 'li Fols'. Thus the thread of contradictions and paradoxes inherent in this topsy-turvy world again comes to the fore.

The last we hear of Daguenet in this episode is yet further evidence of his success. Whilst the knights are talking, some soldiers from London arrive, looking rather pitiful:

Endementriers ke il parloient dou tresor de Londres, avint que une grans comapignie[sic] de chiaus de Londres furent venit a Wincestre, mais mout poure vinrent.<sup>138</sup>

When asked what they were being paid, they reply they had all received a 'demi marc'.<sup>139</sup> This prompts a cry from Sagremor, who reveals that Daguenet has paid his men much better than that:

'Hal' fait Saigremors, 'Dieus saut Daguenet, car il en doune .iii. mars au chevalier, et .i. marc d'argent as home a piet.' Et lors commencent maintenant a rire mout durement.<sup>140</sup>

On this one last piece of evidence for Daguenet's work well done, the narrative leaves all discussion of Arthur's court to concentrate on the war with the Saxons.

Thus ends this second long episode detailing Daguenet's involvement in the strange affairs at Arthur's court. In contrast to the first, we have clearly established the continuing presence of Daguenet's *folie*, allaying the initial doubts as to his

<sup>137</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 248, 118Rb.

<sup>138</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 249, 118Rb-118Va.

<sup>139</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 249, 118Va.

identity and further deepening the mystery and irony of his increasing power and position at court, and emphasising the upside-down nature of a world in which the king renounces his post to his ‘fol’. The relationship between king and ‘fol’ is brought into stark relief when the two finally meet face to face and Daguenet’s pre-eminence is confirmed. But the topsy-turvy nature of the situation extends beyond their relationship. We have already seen how the nature of the court itself contradicts our expectations in its lack of knights and inability to offer assistance. Now also its morality seems to have turned on its head when Daguenet, the murderer of Fole, is defended and protected against the rightly-outraged relatives of his victim.

We leave court with a few small hints that events may turn themselves around. References to the wider context of the False Guinevere episode indicate that the power of the impostor may now start to wane. She has fallen ill, an illness which, in the prose *Lancelot*, eventually leads to her death, before which she confesses fully and the true Guinevere is restored to her rightful place.<sup>141</sup> This is supported by the thwarting of the False Guinevere’s plan to lure Arthur back to her own kingdom.

In the meantime, back at Winchester, battle with the Saxons is about to commence. Galehout has a plan to defeat them: part of his own fleet will be set alight whilst the battle is in progress and then used to burn the fleet of the enemy, which is successfully carried out.<sup>142</sup> At the same time, Galehout is taken prisoner by an enemy giant and is rescued by Lancelot in the process of which the giant is killed.<sup>143</sup> The Saxons are devastated by the loss of their fleet, and Galehout sends a message to give them a month’s grace to regroup.

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<sup>140</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 249, 118Va.

<sup>141</sup> *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.1, IX, §26, p.163 – §37, p. 169. See Appendix Four.

<sup>142</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 255, 122Rb-122Va.

<sup>143</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 256, 123Ra.

At court, it seems that the decline of the False Guinevere is indeed underway. Arthur is now beginning to suspect her of treachery. She had sent a spy to follow the progress of the war, as she wants the Saxons to win:

Ele l'avoit envoiet cele part pour espier comment li païen le faisoient; car ele baoit a douner  
Carmelide au roi de Soissoigne, se il estoit ensi que il venist au desus del Haut Prince et de  
chiaux de cha.<sup>144</sup>

The spy witnesses the capture of Galehout by the giant, and rushes back to tell the False Guinevere. She greets the news with joy - 'Quant la fause Yenyevre oi cou, ele fu tant lie comme nule feme pot plus estre'<sup>145</sup> - and quickly passes it on to Arthur and the court at Sorelois, which is being looked after by Gaheriet in Galehout's absence. Naturally, Arthur and Gaheriet are upset and angry at the news of the Galehout's peril, but Arthur's anger is exacerbated by the behaviour of the False Guinevere. She does not seem to care about the implications of this potential defeat for her husband's honour:

De l'autre part li rois Artus fu si courouchies de ceste nouvele que il esraga de duel. Et lors  
pensa bien et s'aperchuit bien ke sa feme n'amoit de riens s'ounour. Car ele faisoit ioie et  
feste mout grant.<sup>146</sup>

At this point, the news of the outcome of the situation - that Galehout was saved, the giant was killed and the Saxon fleet was burned - arrives at Arthur's court. And who should bring the letter bringing the glad tidings to the king but Daguenet. Recognising the excitement in Daguenet's voice, Arthur opens the door himself to let him in:

Car lors vont maintenant Daguenes criant a haute vois mout durement: 'Ouvres, ouvres!' Li  
rois Artus li oeuvre erramment la porte quant il l'oy car bien s'aperchuit a son samblant que il  
avoit oies boines nouveles.<sup>147</sup>

Daguenet immediately tells them of the contents of the letter:

<sup>144</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 268, 129Va.

<sup>145</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 268, 129Va.

<sup>146</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 268, 129Vb.

<sup>147</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 268, 129Vb.



'Sire,' fait Daguenes, 'vees chi unes letres seelees del saiel mon seignor Gauvain vostre neveu, comment il vous salue et moy apries, et comment li Haus Princes fu pris et comment Lancelos dou Lac le rescoust et ochist le grant iaient, et comment il ont ars et brullet et mis en cendre la navie de chiaus de Soissoigne; sachies certainement ke chou li est avenu par moi seulement, et iou ai mout bien emploiet vo grant tresor.'<sup>148</sup>

Straight away we can see that something has changed in the relationship between Daguenet and Arthur. The very fact that Daguenet brought the letter to Arthur is proof of this. In the earlier episode, Daguenet did not defer to Arthur for anything, nor did he inform him of anything that was going on. In fact, his attitude was positively scathing - even to the extent of threatening the king with his life. It was only through third parties such as Sagremor that Arthur was kept informed of events.

Certainly, there is still evidence that Daguenet retains some of his status. In the same way that he had done when they met earlier, Arthur himself opens the door to Daguenet - not a very kingly act? In the letter, Gauvain still greets both Arthur and Daguenet, although it is perhaps worth nothing that Daguenet is greeted second - 'et moy apries'.

But most striking is Arthur's reaction to Daguenet's claim that 'li est avenu par moi seulement'. Until now, Arthur has had nothing but praise for the way Daguenet has used the contents of his treasury to the defence against the Saxon invaders, as for example, he had told Yvain:

'Adont vous plaist il bien,' cou dist mesire Yvains. 'Il dounet pour soldees tout vostre grant tresor.' 'Il m'est mout biel,' cou dist li rois Artus. 'Car mieus fait despendre li tresors pour deffendre le roiaume ke laisser le amasse.'<sup>149</sup>

Now, however, when Daguenet claims the credit for the current success against the invaders, Arthur seems to treat the idea as a joke:

Et lors commence li rois Artus a rire mout durement.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>148</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 268, 129Va.

<sup>149</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 245, 116Va.

On the whole, then, this little episode seems to hint that Daguenet's previous superiority over Arthur is beginning to wane. Is the situation beginning to return to normal? Is Arthur regaining his senses as he starts to see the False Guinevere for the traitor that she is?

It is only with Daguenet's final appearance that everything really becomes clear, and the reason for the puzzling nature of recent events at Arthur's court is revealed. Before this last meeting, victory is finally won at Winchester.<sup>151</sup> In the light of their earlier successes, Galehout gives the Saxons one last chance to surrender. The Saxons, having had time to renew their fleet, refuse. Galehout then carries out a second arson attack on these ships, and the Saxons eventually gave up.

Galehout returns victorious to Sorelois, where he calls together all the companions of the Round Table. He speaks to them about Arthur's situation, which he tells them is not the king's own fault:

Seignor chevalier, vous estes tout asses sages et preudome, et si saves bien le grant destourbier ki est avenus ou roi Artu, celui ki tout le monde gouvrenoit. Or est il anioientes non pas par sa coupe mais par autrui coupe, et par mauvais conceil, dont cou est grans damages que ensi li est avenut, et molt m'en poise durement.<sup>152</sup>

The 'autrui coupe' to which he refers can surely be no other than the malign influence of the False Guinevere. Galehout proposes a plan to help raise Arthur from the depths of the despair in which he finds himself:

Mais faite le bien; cascuns de vous s'en retort arriere a sa court, et faites tant de ioie et de fieste com vous estes acoustumet a faire; et sacies vraiment, s'il vous avoit en tour lui, ke tous courous et tous mautalens s'en ira d'entor lui et de sor lui. Il se voit en tristrece, et en dolour, et tous seus sans compaignie, dont il ne puet avoir ioie de nule part.<sup>153</sup>

He proposes to restore Arthur to himself by returning to him exactly those knights whose absence causes him the most pain: the companions of the Round

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<sup>150</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 268, 129Vb.

<sup>151</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, pp. 278-81, 135Vb-137Vb.

<sup>152</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 295, 144Rb.

Table. On the one hand, their return would bring Arthur great personal pleasure, as he is under the impression that they had all abandoned him. On the other, the presence of the knights of the Round Table would also restore his court to its previous glory, particularly in the light of this victory over the Saxons.

And so Gauvain and his companions set off for Arthur's court with Saxon prisoners in tow as proof of their success. When they arrive, they find a very different court to the one which Gauvain had so recently visited. The first person they meet is Daguenet:

Illuec estoit Daguenes li Fols et quant il oi la nouvele, il commença a canter et a envoisier  
soi si durement a demener joie com se il tous seus les eust pris, si fust il asses souffissans  
cose de la ioie ke il en faisoit.<sup>154</sup>

Immediately a difference can be seen. Not only is Daguenet referred to for only the second time as 'li Fols',<sup>155</sup> but his behaviour now reflects that title. He seems to have lost the dignity and gravitas which he had possessed when dealing with the problems of court in Arthur's absence. He has reverted to the *fou de cour* which we had been expecting from the very beginning, but which behaviour had been noted for its absence. This reversion to type is emphasised by the use of vocabulary which had become associated with Daguenet in earlier appearances – 'envoisier', for example, in the prose *Tristan*.<sup>156</sup>

There is even reference to his appearance in the prose *Lancelot*. In that romance, he had managed to capture Lancelot whilst the latter was under the distracting influence of a love-trance. Daguenet's subsequent pride and joy at taking Lancelot prisoner single-handed was the subject of amusement to those around him, who knew that under normal circumstances, such a defeat would have been

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<sup>153</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 295, 144Rb.

<sup>154</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 297, 145Va.

<sup>155</sup> See note 93 for the first instance.

impossible.<sup>157</sup> It is this which is reflected in the narrator's comment that Daguenet was celebrating 'com se il tous seus les eust pris'. It cannot be denied that Daguenet played an important part in the organising of the troops which aided the victory over the Saxons, just as it cannot be denied that Daguenet managed to take Lancelot prisoner. But in both cases, it was only the existence of an extremely unusual set of circumstances which led to Daguenet's success, and once these circumstances had returned to normal, so too Daguenet's relationship to those around him reverts to that of an object of amusement.

It is in just this role, as a source of amusement, which Daguenet now carries the good news to Arthur. Over-enthused with pleasure, he bursts into Arthur's room with all the excess of a slapstick comedy, taking the door with him as he goes:

Il s'en ala erramment en la cambre dou roi Artu, tous esragies de joie et de feste, et pour  
cou c'on ne li ouvri apertement, il boute si fort que il abat la porte a la terre.<sup>158</sup>

Inside, we find confirmation that the situation has truly returned to normal. Not only is Daguenet now behaving as we would expect 'le fou le roi Artu' to behave, but Arthur himself is now behaving like the king that he is, as Daguenet finds when he enters his room:

Et troeve le roi Artu dedens ki de ses robes roiaus se paroit por issir de sa cambre et  
monter voloit el palais.<sup>159</sup>

This is a significant moment for Arthur. He has donned the royal robes, most visible symbol of his kingship, and is preparing to leave his room. It is to this room that he had retreated so many times following his rejection of his duties as king. To leave it now, dressed as he is, symbolises his abandonment of that apathy, his re-embrace of his role at court, the return of his willingness to reign – 'et monter voloit el palais'.

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<sup>156</sup> See Chapter Three, note 16.

<sup>157</sup> See Chapter Two, p. 84.

<sup>158</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 297, 145Va.

<sup>159</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 297, 145Va.

This re-reversal of roles, when king once again becomes king, and ‘fol’ once again becomes ‘fol’, is further illustrated in the exchange of words which takes place between them. Once again, Daguenet claims credit for the victory which is being brought to their door, but this time, his words lack the respect and courtliness of his earlier pattern of speech, regressing to the most basic, almost childlike demand for the king to inspect his work:

‘Or tost, dans rois,’ fait Daguenes, ‘venes voir mes oeuvres.’<sup>160</sup>

These are the same ‘oeuvres’ for which he was indeed given much credit by not only Arthur but many others just a short while ago.<sup>161</sup> But this statement now provokes only laughter in Arthur:

Et lors commanche li rois Artus a rire et respondi et dist: ‘Daguenet, cou m’est molt biel,’ ce dist li rois Artus, ‘que ensi l’aves fait.’<sup>162</sup>

Words which had been used in earnest praise of his efforts - ‘il m’est mout biel’<sup>163</sup> - are now only used to humour him.

This change in relationship between king and fool had, as we have seen, already been hinted at when the letter from Gauvain arrived to inform Arthur of the first burning of the Saxon boats and Lancelot’s killing of the giant. Then too Arthur had seemed to dismiss Daguenet’s claim for credit with laughter. But there also remained a vestige of the respect which he had built up amongst the others whom he encountered - demonstrated by the way Daguenet was greeted in the letter alongside the king. Now, however, all of that has gone. Even amongst the other knights, Daguenet and his claims are now only a source of amusement and entertainment:

<sup>160</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 297, 145Va.

<sup>161</sup> For example, Arthur indicated clearly he was more than happy with the way Daguenet had spent his money - see note 148.

<sup>162</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 297, 145Va.

<sup>163</sup> See note 148.

A grant goie et a grant feste monta li rois Artus en la sale, at mout i fist biele chiere et as uns et as autres, et si lor dist cou que Daguenes disoit que il avoit cou fait; et quant il l'oïrent conter, si en fu mout grans la risee tout environ la sale.<sup>164</sup>

Their laughter signals the end of the crisis at Arthur's court. It not only dismisses Daguenet and his claim, but with him goes the memory of the humiliating lapse in the power of the great King Arthur. As normality is restored to Arthur and his court, so the involvement of Daguenet in the *Prophécies* comes to an end.<sup>165</sup>

This involvement, as we have seen, is clearly and inextricably linked to the relationship between Arthur and the False Guinevere. This is reflected in the basic structure of the episode. It is only once the context of the events within the episode of the False Guinevere has been established that Daguenet appears. Only once the experience of the Sages Clers has allowed the narrator to inform us that Arthur has now accepted the False Guinevere in the place of the true queen that the first hint that something is amiss is given.

<sup>164</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, pp. 297-98, 144Va-145Vb.

<sup>165</sup> This return to normality is also marked by Arthur finally learning the truth about the False Guinevere and her plan to usurp the true queen. Only now does Arthur finally learn the truth about her plotting and scheming, and exile her from his kingdom (*Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 298-99, 146Ra-146Rb):

Et lors commanca li rois Artus a oublier les amours de la fausse Yenyevre. Et mesure Gauvains le tenoit molt cort, et molt le amonestoit que il le guerpesist dou tout. Et il si fist maintenant par les miracles Damediu, ensi com li contes la fause Yenyevre le tesmoigne apertement, ki nous conte que cele fause Yenyevre regehi toute la verite et la desloiaute k'ele avoit faite entre li et Bertelac le Viel, et nous conte vraiment que cele fause Yenyevre fu iugie du iuge celestial, et ausi fu Bertelac, si que il en perdirent tout le pooir de lor membres.

The true queen Guinevere is sent for (*Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 299, 146Rb):

Li rois Artus envioia querre l'autre roine Yenyevre ki avoit este en Sorelois en la garde dou Haut Prince Galehot, ki si bele garde et si bone en fist com on feroit de sa seror meismes.

and welcomed back with much celebration (*Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 299, 146Rb):

Et quant la roine fu revenue adont fu tant grans la ioie et la feste ki fu faite que nus ne le vous poroit dire.

As Fritz points out, this marks the point at which the world is turned on its head with Arthur's decision to 'prendre le faux pour le vrai et le vrai pour le faux'.<sup>166</sup> The narrator opens the episode with a statement which, although puzzling at the time, in retrospect describes the situation succinctly: 'la cours estoit a celui point a Daguenet.'<sup>167</sup> This is followed by a series of brief allusions which build upon this hint, leading into the longer explorations of the situation which take place at the court itself.

The closing sequence of short glimpses of Arthur and Daguenet form a chiasmus with the three accounts which opened the episode. Those three early accounts gradually established Daguenet's prominence at court and contrasted it with Arthur's reticence. Daguenet's two final appearances illustrate the wane and eventual cessation of his influence and involvement with the court.

Between these two points, the development of Daguenet's relationship to the court, and thus the development of the upside-down theme as a whole, can be charted by an analysis of one motif - laughter.<sup>168</sup> As we have seen, laughter figured highly in the portrayal of Daguenet in his previous appearances, and in many ways became an integral part of his identity.<sup>169</sup> In the prose *Lancelot* and the prose *Tristan*, his mere presence was enough to arouse the expectation in the audience of forthcoming amusement or entertainment. Laughter frequently accompanied his words and deeds, a laughter which constantly reaffirmed his place in the pecking order: he was Arthur's 'fol' and nothing he said or did was to be taken seriously.

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<sup>166</sup> Fritz, 'Daguenet, ou le bouffon amoureux', p. 54.

<sup>167</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 166, 71Rb.

<sup>168</sup> For a general study of laughter and its role in the Arthurian romances, see Ménard's comprehensive study *Le Rire et le sourire*, esp. pp. 178-83 on the subject of the 'fou'.

<sup>169</sup> Even in *Guiron*, which took him in a slightly different direction, he still retained his role as source of entertainment at court - see Chapter Four, pp. 148 ff.

This disempowerment was reflected in the way he was frequently used and exploited by those around him to create situations for their own amusement, or for the humiliation of others.<sup>170</sup>

This laughter represented for Daguenet a powerlessness, a lack of control. As the object of other people's laughter, the butt of their jokes, he was in many ways dehumanised. Nothing he said or did was taken seriously, and thus he was unable to have any influence over what happened to himself or to those around him.

With this picture of Daguenet in mind, it is hardly surprising that the initial allusions to him in the *Prophécies* aroused a certain amount of confusion in the audience. The visitors to the tournament at Sorelois bring news of an apparently competent and capable Daguenet taking charge of Arthur's court, one who is 'mout courtois' and 'mout biax parliers'.<sup>171</sup> How can this tally with the Daguenet whose incompetent ramblings had previously aroused only amusement, and certainly no hint of the praise he receives here.

In fact, it is the laughter which usually accompanies Daguenet wherever he goes that is conspicuous by its absence in the beginnings of these episodes. The expectation that he was the source of entertainment for the court - 'envoiseüre'<sup>172</sup> - is completely subverted. We are presented with a knight who is not only capable of holding his own in a conversation, and fulfilling tasks within the court usually left in the hands of the most capable of Arthur's barons. Not only does he competently carry out the tasks within the court itself, such as ensuring the provision of adequate food and hospitality, but also reveals that he has devised and begun to implement a

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<sup>170</sup> For example, when Daguenet was used in the prose *Tristan* to 'gaber' King Mark. See Chapter Three, pp. 125 ff.

<sup>171</sup> See note 9.

<sup>172</sup> See Chapter Three, note 16.



plan to raise the troops to defend the kingdom against the Saxons. And whereas in the prose *Lancelot* or the prose *Tristan*, such claims would have been greeted as unbelievable with laughter and derision, Sagremor and the visitors who experience his hospitality show no sign of such condescension.

Just as we are beginning to wonder if this is indeed a new character and that we had been mistaken in our assumption that this Daguenet corresponds to the Daguenet we have met before, along comes Gauvain. Gauvain finds himself in the same position as the audience had been at the outset. Having been away from court, he is unaware of recent events and his reaction to Daguenet when he meets him mirrors that which we would have expected. When Daguenet proposes his plan to pay Gauvain's troops to go to Winchester, Gauvain's cannot take him seriously - he laughs.<sup>173</sup> For the reader, this is most comforting, as it demonstrates that we are not the only ones to be surprised by Daguenet's new-found capability. If Gauvain shares our original expectation that Daguenet is unreliable and not to be taken seriously, then we are correct in concluding that Daguenet's behaviour is far from the norm.

By introducing Gauvain at this point, the author is able to address one of the main issues for the audience - Daguenet's role at court. Gauvain shares the audience's expectation that Daguenet is no more than Arthur's 'fol' who is to be humoured but not taken too seriously. Indeed, having spoken to him, Gauvain then seeks out his uncle the king to find out what is *really* going to be done about the Saxon threat.

However, the encounter does not turn out as he had hoped, as Arthur makes it clear that he is not interested in getting involved with anything beyond his own front

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<sup>173</sup> 'Sans nul doute c'est là un des traits les plus caractéristiques de la mentalité médiévale. On se gausse des fous comme on se moque des infirmes. On les méprise, on les redoute et on en rit' (Ménard, *Le Rire et le sourire*, p. 180).

doorstep. This leads Gauvain to realise that his earlier dismissal of Daguenet had been mistaken, and when he speaks to his troops, he is forced to acknowledge that the court is in fact ‘a Daguenet’ - Daguenet is in charge.

It is the irony, the contrast between Gauvain’s dismissive laughter and this acknowledgement of Daguenet’s role which is particularly striking. It emphasises the significant gap between his normal role, that of ‘fol’ to the king, and the present unexpected variation. This confirmation that Daguenet is indeed behaving at a tangent to normality provides a key for the audience to interpret the rest of this bizarre situation. With Daguenet as our gauge, we can now see that not only is the rest of the court rather strange, but is in fact a reversal of normality. The only way to make sense of the whole thing is to accept that, like Daguenet’s, the behaviours of the court and the king are confusing because they have actually been turned on their head: we are now witnessing an upside-down version of reality.

An integral part of this reversal of normality is a shift in the centre of power towards Daguenet. As we saw above, as the object of amusement and laughter, Daguenet had been very much a passive participant in previous romances, in the control of those who chose to manipulate and exploit him, where laughter is a sign of the power they held over him. Gauvain’s laughter at Daguenet’s words indicates that he still assumes this level of superiority, a certain power over the ‘fol’. However, even this is soon turned on its head as Gauvain admits Daguenet’s leadership of the court, and accepts the royal standard from him on behalf of his troops.

This shift in power is confirmed and underlined when Yvain comes to court. Yvain’s visit parallels that of Gauvain in many ways, but differs in one significant factor. When Gauvain encountered Daguenet, it was Gauvain who had laughed at Daguenet and the notion that Daguenet had assumed the role of ‘counestable’. Yvain

makes a similar enquiry of Daguenet - he had heard that Daguenet was now 'bailluis'.<sup>174</sup> This time, it is not Yvain who is amused at the idea that Daguenet should have taken on this role. It is Daguenet who now demonstrates his control over the situation by laughing himself. His laughter dismisses the question and the questioner as foolish, as he asserts that he is not only 'bailluis', but 'rois', 'counestables' and 'tresoriers' as well.

Daguenet's continuing prominence at court is reflected in this control of laughter. Just as Gauvain had done, Yvain tries to talk the king out of his apathy, but is told only that Arthur is quite happy for Daguenet to continue on his behalf. Returning from his conversation with Arthur, Yvain passes on the king's endorsement of Daguenet's work to him. Instead of polite acknowledgement or perhaps even pleasure at this praise from on high, Daguenet's immediate reaction is to laugh.<sup>175</sup>

On the one hand, this is a further demonstration of the inversion of the 'fol' and the king - Daguenet is demonstrating his lack of respect for Arthur, his own perceived superiority over the recalcitrant king. He dismisses this praise, remarking that the king had no option but to speak of him thus if he wished to elude the same fate as the last person who crossed him - Fole the treasurer.

This threat which accompanies the laughter introduces a particularly sinister element to the scene, which becomes not just an illustration of the power which Daguenet wields at court, but the possible dangers which it entails. In recalling the death of the treasurer, Daguenet is also making reference to the one incident which has proved beyond doubt his continuing *folie*. As he has already proved that he is capable of such violence, there can be little doubt that his threat against the king

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<sup>174</sup> See note 95.

could be carried through. His scornful laughter could be a further sign of the fundamental instability of the character who is asserting himself over the court, and the consequent perils this implies.

On the other hand, this laughter could have a less ominous interpretation, one which provides an excellent illustration of the topsy-turvy nature of the world in which ‘fol’ has become king and king has become ‘fol’. Rather than scorn, Daguenet is displaying the sort of amused indulgence towards Arthur that has so frequently been shown towards himself by others.<sup>176</sup> In laughing at Arthur’s praise of him, Daguenet is turning Arthur’s words into his own source of amusement, making him his own ‘fol’. Just as Daguenet had provided entertainment for the wider court and not just the king, so too general laughter combines with that of Daguenet at Arthur’s expense.<sup>177</sup>

In either case, Daguenet, as the instigator of the laughter, indicates that he is currently in the controlling position. He is now far from being the object of amusement for others, and is stamping his authority over those who once laughed at him. This position of power will soon be reinforced when he finally comes face to face with the king.

But for Daguenet, this is the climax of his success, for from now on this upside down world will gently begin to right itself as the False Guinevere begins to lose her hold over Arthur and his kingdom. The first hints of the shift of power out of Daguenet’s hands comes soon after his encounter with the king. The narrative moves

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<sup>175</sup> See note 108.

<sup>176</sup> For example, Arthur indulges Daguenet’s request to meet one the many Tristans he imagines to exist by encouraging him to go to Cornwall, and is similarly humoured when he arrives there (see Chapter Four, pp. 150 ff.).

<sup>177</sup> For a discussion of other examples of Arthur being ridiculed, see Ménard, *Le Rire et le sourire*, pp. 311-14.

to Winchester, where Sagremor, Kay, Beduier and Lucan are discussing Daguenet's success as their replacement at court. Noting that Daguenet's payment to the mercenaries is far greater than that of other companies of men, Sagremor laughs.<sup>178</sup> On the face of it, this outburst seems innocent and fairly insignificant. The knights are simply displaying their pleasure that their paymaster is more generous than the other. But it also casts a shadow of a doubt over Daguenet's judgement. Is he being too generous with the wealth of the kingdom? Do these knights think they are profiting from a gullible Daguenet? Their laughter does not directly ridicule Daguenet, but it moves him back out of the protective shadow of 'he who laughs' into the spotlight of 'he who is laughed at', and anticipates the more obvious shift in power to come.

Indeed, as we have seen, by the time the narrative returns to court, normality is beginning to return. The False Guinevere is ill, losing her grip on Arthur, and the topsy-turvy world is starting to right itself. This development is made particularly clear when Daguenet brings news of the successful progress of the war with the Saxons. We have seen above how this little scene indicates the change in balance between the two as the king appears to regain control of himself and the situation.

Again, laughter signals where the true power in the relationship now lies. Arthur does not conceal his amusement at Daguenet's claim to have been responsible for the current success by virtue of his prudent disposal of the contents of the treasury. The king's laughter indicates that his attitude towards Daguenet is returning to that with which we are familiar with from earlier romances - Daguenet's words are no longer taken seriously. Although some vestiges of Daguenet's important role in the recent events remain, such as the fact that Daguenet was also greeted in the

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<sup>178</sup> See note 139.

letter containing the news from Winchester, Arthur is beginning to treat Daguenet with less respect, an indication of the impending restoration of the familiar relationship of king and 'fol'.

This balance is of course finally restored following the defeat of the Saxons and the triumphant return of the victorious knights. Arthur symbolically dons the robes of kingship to demonstrate his return to normality and Daguenet's slapstick behaviour, breaking down a door in his enthusiasm to reach the king, illustrates a similar return to the role of 'fol'. And again, the motif of laughter underpins this re-establishment of the status quo. Again, Daguenet claims the credit for the victory, and again Arthur's laughter dismisses this claim.

But this time it is not just Daguenet's relationship as 'fol' to Arthur which is confirmed. Arthur repeats Daguenet's words to the crowds waiting to celebrate the victory over the Saxons, who also greet the claims with laughter, and Daguenet's return to the position of object of amusement and laughter for the whole Arthurian court is reiterated. It is interesting to note that this little scene also parallels one we saw earlier, when Yvain brought word of Arthur's endorsement of Daguenet. At that point, it was Daguenet's control and authority which were underlined when Arthur became the focus for the laughter of both Daguenet and the others at court. Now, the exact reverse is being played out, as Daguenet is once again the source of amusement for king and court.

This then provides further proof, if it were needed, that the peculiar upside-down world over which the False Guinevere had reigned has managed to swing itself back round the right way. King is king and 'fol' is 'fol', and soon even the court will be restored to normal as the knights of the Round Table return from Winchester in

triumph.<sup>179</sup> The motif of laughter, so closely associated with Daguenet in his previous appearances, here again links itself to Daguenet to map out the evolution of his relationship with the court and the king, a relationship which is the key to interpreting the confusing events around them. With the restoration of equilibrium, Daguenet's job is done, and he disappears from the narrative with the laughter and amusement of a renewed Arthur and the court as his final salute. As Fritz comments:

La joie de la court est rétablie, la fête peut commencer, le roi retrouve son rire devant les  
paroles de son fou.<sup>180</sup>

So how does this appearance relate to Daguenet's previous roles? In the prose *Lancelot* and the prose *Tristan*, Daguenet acted as an index pointing up the love-*folie* of the major characters next to whom he appeared. In the *Guiron*, he himself embodied that same love-*folie*. The *Prophécies* restores that function of index, creating a role for Daguenet where he is the key to making sense of the whole situation.

But central to all of this is his relationship with the king: 'le fou devient roi, alors que le roi sombre dans une semi-folie'.<sup>181</sup> Daguenet's apparent sanity highlights the apparent *folie* in the king. But what is the nature of this *folie*? On one level, Arthur, it could be argued, finds himself in an analogous situation to both Lancelot and Tristan. He too has fallen deeply in love with the False Guinevere, to the extent that 'avugles estoit a l'amour de li'.<sup>182</sup> Like Lancelot, he is so totally distracted by this love-*folie* that his normal functions are inhibited, and he lays himself open to

<sup>179</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 295, 144Rb.

<sup>180</sup> Fritz, 'Daguenet, ou le bouffon amoureux', p. 56.

<sup>181</sup> Fritz, 'Daguenet, ou le bouffon amoureux', p. 54.

<sup>182</sup> *Prophesies*, ed. Berthelot, p. 136, 54Vb. Note that in the cyclic prose *Lancelot*, Arthur falls in love with the False Guinevere whilst he is her prisoner, whilst in the non-cyclic romance, he is bewitched by a magic potion. For a list of articles which discuss the differences between the versions of this episode, see Appendix Four.

humiliation and criticism. This hiatus allows Daguenet to step in and, by achieving that which would normally be unimaginable – capturing the great knight, running the court – Daguenet is able to draw attention to the original cause of the problem – love.<sup>183</sup>

But while on the face of it the two situations are similar, they vary in several important ways. Firstly, Daguenet was able to capture Lancelot only because that latter was completely unaware of anything that was going on. Lancelot was so distracted that he was in danger of losing his life, and even when he was rescued he was unable to communicate with Daguenet. Whilst he certainly suffered public humiliation as a result of letting his love distract him, he played no conscious part in his own downfall.

The same cannot be claimed for Arthur. It is clearly pointed out to the king on at least three separate occasions and in no uncertain terms that his behaviour is endangering the court and the kingdom. Where Lancelot can at least claim he was not aware of what was going on, Arthur makes it quite clear that he is not interested in being involved in the court, and positively encourages Daguenet to take his place. The king is consciously involved in the whole process.

But the most significant difference between Daguenet's role in the prose *Lancelot* and that in the *Prophécies* is Daguenet himself. In the prose *Lancelot*, Daguenet is labelled as *fou* and a coward,<sup>184</sup> and this does not change at any point. He is able to take Lancelot prisoner only because he found himself in the right place at the right time, at a juncture when Lancelot would have been equally vulnerable to a child. That Daguenet was there to rescue him and take him prisoner was symbolic of

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<sup>183</sup> As we noted in Chapter One, the love-*folie* found in the Arthurian romances is quite different from the medically recognised illness of *amour héroïque*. See Chapter One, note 79.

<sup>184</sup> See Chapter Two, note 13.



Lancelot's plight, but was a reflection only of Lancelot's failure, not of any sudden strength or bravery on Daguenet's part, despite his claims to the contrary. It was Lancelot's uncharacteristic behaviour which made the situation possible: Daguenet did not achieve anything more than he would normally have been capable of.

The same is not true of Daguenet in the *Prophécies*. Arthur's apathy does leave the way open for a humiliation similar to Lancelot's: in Arthur's current reticent mood, anyone, including a *fou*, could feasibly take control over him. But the 'fol' who steps in to fill Arthur's shoes is not the *fou* coward of the prose *Lancelot*. The world is on its head, and therefore instead of the *fou* coward we are expecting, Daguenet is most courtly, well-behaved, and very competent indeed. His hospitality impresses visitors, and his plan to sell the king's treasure may be a little unconventional, but there is no denying it has the desired effect.

And finally, from being the cause of longer term humiliation to Arthur, Daguenet in fact contributes to his speedy rehabilitation. Because of what Daguenet has achieved, Arthur can slip easily back into his regal role with no lasting evidence of this bizarre interruption. Once normality has been restored, and the king and the 'fol' have resumed their familiar roles, the idea that Daguenet and not the king was behind the victory against the Saxons seems so outlandish that it is openly ridiculed by the king and his court.

In one sense then, Daguenet is an index of Arthur's love-*folie* in that his mere presence in juxtaposition with the king's strange behaviour invites comparisons with Daguenet's own *folie*. Here, the author is drawing upon the associations with love-*folie* which have built upon through Daguenet's earlier appearances, particularly opposite Lancelot and Tristan, to provide the relevant context.

Parallels with the *Perlesvaus* suggest that love may not be the only possible explanation for Arthur's strange behaviour. As we have already seen, there are many parallels between Arthur's behaviour in the *Prophécies* and his behaviour in the *Perlesvaus*.<sup>185</sup> The symptoms in both are very similar, and concur with a diagnosis of *melancholia*. There is the same apathy, the same failure to hold court, to hold tournaments, to demonstrate *largesse*.<sup>186</sup> It seems Arthur is here again suffering the 'volentez delaienz'<sup>187</sup> which caused his earlier troubles. Where in *Perlesvaus*, Arthur was turned away by the hermit from attending mass due to his 'pechié',<sup>188</sup> he is again rejected by the church in the *Prophécies*, unable to attend mass and is even subject to a papal interdict.

There are, however, certain differences between the two situations. In the *Perlesvaus*, it is eventually revealed that it was Perceval's failure to ask the questions at the Grail Castle which is the reason for the decline of Arthur and his court.<sup>189</sup> For Arthur in the *Prophécies*, the fault lies much closer to home, in his own decision to reject his queen in favour of the False Guinevere. It is this sin which drove the Pope to punish him, and perhaps, by extension, Arthur's *folie*, his *melancholia*, is a divine punishment.<sup>190</sup>

If the precise nature of Arthur's *folie* is not clarified, in many ways, this is not important. The author's aim is to illustrate through the deterioration of king and court the implication of Arthur's misjudged acceptance of the False Guinevere, and

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<sup>185</sup> See above, note 40.

<sup>186</sup> See above, pp. 202-03.

<sup>187</sup> *Perlesvaus*, ed. Nitze, i, l.69.

<sup>188</sup> *Perlesvaus*, ed. Nitze, i, ll.329-33.

<sup>189</sup> '[Arthur's] decline and that of his kingdom are linked with Perceval's failure to ask the questions' (Kennedy, *Lancelot and the Grail*, p. 317).

it is enough to establish that his ability as king is seriously inhibited. He makes Daguenet the pivot around which the Arthurian court turns first upside-down, then returns to its rightful order. Daguenet's involvement lasts only as long as the world remains on its head, and his departure marks a point at which normality is restored. Unlike in the *Le Chevalier de la Charrete*, where 'Chrétien's aim in [using the Upside Down World topos] is to condition the response of the reader to the remainder of the romance',<sup>191</sup> the motif here is used to elaborate on a narrative episode which has already occurred in a previous romance – the episode of the False Guinevere. Our episode briefly but quite brutally demonstrates the error of Arthur's exchange of the two Guineveres, extrapolating this inversion of right and wrong onto the rest of the court.

Daguenet's role here, in his last major appearance in the French Arthurian prose romances, brings together elements of all his previous appearances that we have looked at, whilst adding its own particular ingredients to his colourful story. The author relies on the subversion of the expectations of Daguenet which have been built up over the course of those earlier romances in order to index the subversion of the wider expectations. Once again, Daguenet proves that, although his appearances are few and far between, he manages to catch the imagination of the medieval authors in whose hands his story 's'édifie peu à peu au fil des manuscrits.'<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> 'Folie qui est ici châtement divin sur un roi qui a offensé Dieu' (Fritz, 'Daguenet, ou le bouffon amoureux', p. 55).

<sup>191</sup> Shit, 'Le Chevalier de la Charrete: A World Upside Down?', p. 818.

<sup>192</sup> Fritz, 'Daguenet, ou le bouffon amoureux', p. 37.

## Conclusion

At the beginning of this study, I noted that the interest of most scholars of medieval Arthurian literature lies with the major characters of the romances. Very little work focuses on those recurring minor characters who populate the background of those stories. With this examination of one such character, Daguenet le Fol, I hope to have demonstrated the dangers of neglecting a wealth of characters whose potential to enhance our understanding of this body of work and the way in which it was composed remains largely untapped.

Daguenet, for most modern readers, is a character who, due to the scarcity and brevity of his appearances, seems worthy of little more than a passing mention. However, as we have seen, it is precisely the brief yet recurrent nature of his involvement with the romances which makes him so remarkable. Daguenet's increasingly detailed and significant appearances bear witness to the fact that, despite his apparently minor status, something about him caught the imagination of a number of medieval writers.<sup>1</sup> Such was the interest he aroused that each writer devoted care and attention to retaining a continuity of this character with his previous appearances, whilst clearly adapting him for his own purpose. Thus the *fou de cour* of the prose *Lancelot* is transformed into the *fou d'amour* of *Guiron le Courtois*, while the author of the last retains the link to the first with a deliberate account of Daguenet at Arthur's court.

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<sup>1</sup> This is further attested by a number of passing references made by authors other than those we have looked at. See Appendix One for details.

It is of course Daguenet's *folie* which sets him apart, and which attracted this interest over the course of the thirteenth century. The preponderance of knights in medieval literature who succumb to *folie* at various points in their career is evidence of the fascination of the contemporary audience with this subject, and it is to this fascination that the authors can respond with their treatment of Daguenet. It is the flexibility of this character which allows these authors to explore their own particular aspect of *folie*: unlike his counterparts such as Yvain, Tristan and Lancelot, Daguenet does not belong to a tradition, he does not have a history, a set of expectations which have to be taken into account, and so his *folie* can be written and re-written. Fritz summarises this freedom:

Personnage qui n'est pas prisonnier d'une longue tradition, Daguenet échappe au stéréotype et est le lieu d'une invention: par sa bouche et par ses gestes, la folie va parler et se transformer.<sup>2</sup>

Daguenet's involvement in the prose *Lancelot* and prose *Tristan* is particularly significant for his role as index for the *folie* of the heroes with whom he appears. The very presence of Daguenet and the way in which he interacts with both Lancelot and Tristan is clearly designed to draw attention to the *folie* to which each of these great knights succumb. In the case of Lancelot, his improbable capture by Daguenet reflects the power of the love which threatens Lancelot's sanity, a love which will eventually rob him of the same. In the case of Tristan, Daguenet's failure to observe the mores of chivalric conduct highlights the strength of the knightly instinct which remains within Tristan in spite of his *folie*, thus prefiguring the full recovery of that knightly prowess.

One aspect of Daguenet's *folie* remains in evidence in each of the episodes we have looked at in previous chapters: his role as *fou de cour*. It is in this role that we

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<sup>2</sup> Fritz, 'Daguenet, ou le bouffon amoureux', p.37.

first meet him in the prose *Lancelot*, and his association with the entertainment and amusement of the court, 'par soulas et par envoiseüre',<sup>3</sup> is continued and emphasised in the prose *Tristan*. But whilst Daguenet's capture of Lancelot is essentially comic, and his involvement in the humiliation of the Vallet a la Cote Mautaillee and King Mark firmly establishes his relationship to laughter, already in the prose *Tristan* we can see the darker aspect of *folie* which the later authors will choose to explore. Daguenet's violent and disproportionate attack on the shepherds marks a departure from the light-hearted antics found elsewhere, a contrast which shocks the audience and imprints itself on the mind of the audience.

The author of *Guiron le Courtois* takes this violent episode as the point of departure from which to begin his treatment of Daguenet. Opening with a violent scene closely reminiscent of the encounter between Daguenet and Tristan in the prose *Tristan*, the author uses the gradual revelation of Daguenet's story to deconstruct carefully the prejudices which prompted us to jump to the conclusion that the behaviour of the *fou* was irrational and unprovoked. By the end of the episode, Daguenet is transformed from violent *fou* to sympathetic hero not by a change in his condition, but by a shift in our point of view. We are forced to reassess our attitude and the stereotype we hold of *folie*, its causes and effects.

Similarly, the author of the *Prophécies de Merlin* uses Daguenet to provoke a reassessment of our ideas about *folie*: not, however, that of Daguenet himself, but of Arthur and his court. Playing on the expectation of Daguenet's behaviour built up through his role as *fou de cour* in earlier romances, we are invited to expect the concomitant light-heartedness and laughter which we found in the prose *Lancelot* and the prose *Tristan*. When Daguenet fails to display any sign of such behaviour,

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<sup>3</sup> See Chapter Three, note 40.

and indeed proceeds to act in direct contradiction to our expectations, our attention is drawn towards the odd behaviour of the other members of court, and particularly to the sanity of King Arthur himself. In this way the 'upside-down' nature of the court, which results from Arthur's acceptance of the False Guinevere over the true queen, is clearly signalled to the reader. Laughter, once used merely to dismiss Daguenet's foolish antics, now takes on a more sinister role as its changing use reflects the wax and wane of Daguenet's pre-eminence at court, in its turn an indication of this *monde à l'envers*.

But Daguenet's appearances are interesting not only for this exploration of the theme of *folie*, but also for the way in which they point up the art and the craft of the medieval writer himself. Daguenet is not simply shoe-horned into these romances at salient points chosen as appropriate moments to address this subject without a care for continuity and integrity. He is carefully woven into the fabric of the narrative, and although he may not appear again, the effect of his involvement does not necessarily disappear with him. In the prose *Lancelot* Daguenet himself exits the narrative in the wake of Arthur's dismissive laughter. However, his encounter with Lancelot is not forgotten, as Guinevere's memory of those events helps her eventually to recognise her Lancelot and to bring together the lovers. In the prose *Tristan*, by bringing news of the 'fol de la fontaine' to King Mark, it is Daguenet who sets in train Mark's search for this creature, which ultimately ends in Tristan's recovery at the hands of Iseut. Conversely, in the *Prophécies de Merlin*, it is Daguenet who ensures that the episode detailing Arthur's apathy concurs with events which it is intended to expand upon in the prose *Lancelot*. Whilst on one level, Daguenet draws attention to the strange behaviour of king and court, on a practical

narrative level, his success in running the court means that on his recovery, the King can continue as if nothing had happened,

Naturally, it is certainly the case that the detailed examination made here of Daguenet le Fol will not reap equally rewarding results if applied to every minor character in medieval Arthurian romance. However, it is also hard to imagine that he is the only character who merits such attention, and it is hoped that similar future studies will be undertaken to prove this to be the case.



## Appendix One

### *Table of Daguenet’s appearances in the French Arthurian prose romances*

#### *Main appearances*

Summary of Daguenet’s main appearances in the French Arthurian prose romances. For further details of dating and editions, see the relevant Chapter.

Chapter	Romance	Date	Description	Edition
Chapter 2	prose <i>Lancelot</i>	pre 1226	Daguenet captures the distracted Lancelot and brings to the queen as his prisoner	- <i>Lancelot</i> , ed. Micha, vol.7, XLVIIa, §7, p.445 - §17, p.452 - <i>Lancelot</i> , ed. Kennedy, i, p.267 - p.272
Chapter 3	prose <i>Tristan</i>	pre 1235	Daguenet is defeated by Brunor, the Vallet a la Cote Mautaillee	- <i>Tristan</i> , ed. Curtis, ii, §654, p.229 - §655, p.230
			Daguenet attacks shepherds who look after Tristan; Tristan attacks Daguenet, and Daguenet takes news of the ‘fol de la fontaine’ back to King Mark’s court	- <i>Tristan</i> , ed. Ménard, i, §169, p.248 - §174, p.254
			Daguenet is used to humiliate King Mark , who is told he is Lancelot and as a result flees in terror	- Appendix Four
Chapter 4	<i>Guiron le Courtois</i>	1250-1275	Daguenet kills the knight whose betrayal and abduction of Daguenet’s wife precipitated Daguenet’s folie	- <i>Guiron</i> , ed. Bubenicek, iv, §156, p.281 - §183, p.318
Chapter 5	<i>Prophécies de Merlin</i>	1272-1279	Daguenet is left in charge of Arthur’s court when it is abandoned by its knights and the King himself withdraws	- <i>Prophesies</i> , ed. Berthelot, p.166, 71Rb; p.172, 74Vb; p.179, 78Vb; p.211, 97Rb - p.213, 98Rb; p.242, 114Vb - p.249, 118Va; p.268, Vb; p.297, 145Va – p.298, 145Vb.

Daguenet is also mentioned in a further number of romances, evidencing the widespread awareness of his character, although they are so brief they add little to our understanding of his character.

Romance	Date	Description	Edition
<i>Guiron le Courtois</i>	15th century	An insertion into the Guiron by the redactor of the Turin manuscript, which seems to bear little relation to the original episode. Shortly after leaving the Chastel Apparant, Hervi and his companion witness Daguenet killing two relatives of Helior de l'Espine who had attacked him.	- <i>Guiron</i> , ed. Bubenicek, iv, pp. 347-349
<i>Estoire de Merlin</i>	shortly before 1230 <sup>1</sup>	Daguenet appears fleetingly at court, and the narrator's description reflects closely, in places almost verbatim, that found in the prose <i>Lancelot</i> above.	- <i>The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances</i> , ed. H.Oskar Sommer, ii: <i>Lestoire de Merlin</i> (1908), p. 322, ll.5-24
<i>Le Livre d'Artus</i>	last quarter 13 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>2</sup>	Gauvain uses 'Daguenet li Coars' as a pseudonym for an adventure during which he rescues a lady. No reason is given for this, and the only result is the anger of the lady, who think she has been sent a poor knight by Arthur, until she finds out Gauvain's true identity	- Sommer, <i>Vulgate Version</i> , vii: <i>Le Livre d'Artus</i> (1910), pp. 77-142
prose <i>Tristan</i>	13 <sup>th</sup> century <sup>3</sup>	Agloval passes Tristan off as Daguenet when he comes to rescue Agloval from prison	- BN.f.fr. 12599: Löseth, p.222.

<sup>1</sup> On the dating of the *Estoire de Merlin*, see J.D. Bruce, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance from the Beginnings down to the Year 1300*, 2 vols (Geneva: Slatkine, 1974; first publ. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1928), i, pp. 395 and 453.

<sup>2</sup> See Bruce, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance*, i, p. 443; *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Loomis, pp. 336-338.

<sup>3</sup> For a description of this manuscript, see Lathuillère, *Analyse*, pp. 74-77.

## Appendix Two

### *Manuscript tradition of the prose 'Tristan'*

The prose *Tristan* is generally accepted to follow the *Lancelot Vulgate* cycle, although the exact dating is a source of debate.<sup>1</sup> Until recently, the only published source for study of the whole prose *Tristan* was the excellent analysis carried out at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Löseth, in which he summarises, in 570 numbered paragraphs, episodes in all the manuscripts available to him in the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris. He later also performed the same work on the manuscripts in London, Florence and Rome, but his original tome remains the standard by which the content of manuscripts and editions are described. Using two base manuscripts, BN.fr. 334 and BNF 757, Löseth provides a detailed outline of the complicated structure, along with the variations in other manuscripts. Events in the romance are still generally referred to in terms of the paragraph number in Löseth.

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<sup>1</sup> The views on the actual date of composition are as follows: Löseth, *Analyse*, p. xxiv: 'Antérieur au roman de Palamèdes, et postérieur au *Lancelot*, il doit avoir été composé entre 1215 et 1230'; J. D. Bruce, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance*, i, p. 488, note 13: 'early thirties of the thirteenth century'; Eugène Vinaver, *Études sur le 'Tristan' en prose: les sources, les manuscrits, bibliographie critique* (Paris: Champion, 1925), p. 23: 'Le roman en prose de Tristan a été écrit entre 1225 et 1230'; *Tristan*, ed. Curtis, i, p. 8: 'Le roman en prose de Tristan, écrit entre 1215 et 1235'; Baumgartner dates the first part of the romance, also known as the Prologue and which she also believes the oldest, as between 1230 and 1235 in Baumgartner, *Le 'Tristan en prose': essai d'interprétation*, p. 40. Colette-Anne Van Coolput does not contribute to this debate in her *Aventures querant*.

The debate surrounding the classification of the huge number of manuscripts which survive is complicated.<sup>2</sup> Until §184 of Löseth, a section also known as the *Prologue*, the manuscripts are in general agreement:

Dans cette première partie du roman, les manuscrits s'accordent pour donner les mêmes épisodes dans le même ordre.<sup>3</sup>

From that point, they diverge into two versions, a shorter one, referred to as Version I (V.I) and a longer one, known as Version II (V.II). Until recently, the Prologue was attributed to V.II, which was thought to be a later expanded and inferior redaction of V.I. However, Emmanuèle Baumgartner argues in her excellent study that neither version is wholly anterior to the other, and that each represents a reworking of a common, now lost source.<sup>4</sup>

There currently exist three published editions of the prose *Tristan*: Renée L. Curtis's<sup>5</sup> three volume edition covers the early part of the romance, equivalent to the first 92 paragraphs of Löseth, and is based on ms Carpentras, Bibl. Municipale, 404, the choice of which has since been criticised.<sup>6</sup> Philippe Ménard's nine volume edition, which is based on the ms Vienna Nationalbibliothek 2542,<sup>7</sup> picks up where

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<sup>2</sup> Ménard counts 82 manuscripts or fragments (*Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, p. 8): 'à l'heure ou nous écrivons on connaît 82 manuscrits ou fragments de manuscrits de l'oeuvre.'

<sup>3</sup> Baumgartner, *Le 'Tristan en Prose': essai d'interprétation*, p. 36. She then discusses the small number of exceptions (pp. 36-40).

<sup>4</sup> As Baumgartner notes (*Le 'Tristan en prose': essai d'interprétation*, p. 62): 'Il faut dès lors admettre qu'à partir du §184 de l'analyse de Löseth ni V.I, ni à plus forte raison V.II, ne reproduisent d'une manière continue une première version du *Tristan* en prose rédigée avant 1235-1240 mais qu'elles sont l'une at l'autre, à des degrés divers, des remaniements composites, postérieurs à 1240, d'une version originale perdue.'

<sup>5</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Curtis.

<sup>6</sup> Philippe Ménard, in the introduction to the first volume of his edition comments (*Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, p. 9): 'Surtout, elle se fonde sur un manuscrit gravement incomplet, un des nombreux manuscrits fragmentaires de l'oeuvre.'

<sup>7</sup> Ménard gives a detailed justification of his choice of version and base manuscript in his introduction to the first volume of the edition (*Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, pp. 9-15). Ménard follows the argument of

Curtis left off and continues to the end of the romance – Löseth §92-571. These follow the longer so-called version II of the romance.<sup>8</sup> The latest edition of the prose *Tristan*,<sup>9</sup> reproduces the text of the shorter Version I as contained in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, 757.<sup>10</sup>

Daguenet's first appearance occurs in §69 of Löseth, §§ 654-656 of Curtis's edition. He appears at the beginning of what has been identified as *Le Roman du Vallet a la Cote Maltailliee*, a pre-existing 'romance' adapted and interpolated into the prose *Tristan*. The tale's presence here is rather odd, as it does not involve Tristan at all, and its only connection to the prose *Tristan* is the involvement of King Arthur. P. Meyer and G. Paris identified it as a separate 'romance' at an early stage in Tristan scholarship, and discovered and published the 144 lines which constitute the only identified fragment of the original 'romance' which survives.<sup>11</sup>

Very little has been written upon the subject of *Le Roman du Vallet a la Cote Maltailliee*, and Gaston Paris's comment that its presence here gives rise to 'diverses

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Baumgartner (see above, note 3), that the version previously referred to by Löseth and Vinaver as Version II was in fact the earlier and more original version, and not a later interpolated and expanded modification of the romance found in the manuscripts containing Version I. Ménard details how he discovered that ms Vienna B.N. 2542, containing Version II, had been wrongly attributed to the fifteenth century, in fact dates from the early 1300s, and thus 'On peut dire que c'est un des plus anciens manuscrits complets de l'oeuvre' (p. 10). This makes it very suitable for the purpose of his edition.

<sup>8</sup> Ménard's aims to produce 'un texte de bonne qualité qui servira de base aux recherches futures' (*Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, p.15).

<sup>9</sup> *Le roman de Tristan en prose: version du manuscrit fr. 757 de la Bibliothèque nationale de Paris*, 3 vols, ed. by Joël Blanchard and others (Paris: Champion, 1997-2000).

<sup>10</sup> BnF 757 had been seriously considered by Ménard as the basis for his edition (*Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, pp. 9-10): 'De prime abord, nous fûmes tentés par les mss 756 et 757 de la B.N. de Paris, de la fin du XIVe siècle, qui donnent l'ensemble de l'œuvre. En outre, pour la deuxième partie du roman, où les rédactions divergent, le ms. 757 est le seul à donner intégralement la version I du texte.'

<sup>11</sup> Published by P. Meyer and G. Paris in 'Fragment du *Vallet a la Cote Maltailliee*', in *Romania*, 26 (1897), pp. 276-80.

questions assez difficiles à résoudre' prompted an article by Curtis in which she seeks to answer some of those very questions.<sup>12</sup> She can find no substantive reason why such a long romance, encompassing 141 paragraphs of Curtis's edition, and in which neither Tristan nor any of the other familiar figures from the main romance appear, should be included in the romance at all. The Vallet himself, Brunor or Brun le Noir, does not go on to play an important role in the main romance, although he does appear later on, but is not singled out from the knights around him.<sup>13</sup> Nor do the events told in the shorter romance have wider repercussions within the prose *Tristan*.

Curtis sought to prove whether the *Roman du Vallet a la Cote Mautaillee* was part of the original prose *Tristan* or a later, yet still very early, interpolation. Of the thirty-one manuscripts which contain this part of the prose *Tristan*, only two do not contain the shorter romance. There is not enough evidence to infer whether these latter two manuscripts are closer to the original, or simply excluded the romance as superfluous to requirements. Curtis does detail a timing inconsistency present in the narrative of those containing the *Roman du Vallet a la Cote Mautaillee* which could indicate the interpolation of the smaller romance after the composition of the larger.<sup>14</sup> She concludes that whilst the romance may not have appeared in the original prose *Tristan*, it certainly became a part of it at a very early stage in the development of the main romance.

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<sup>12</sup> Renée L. Curtis, 'A Romance within a Romance: the Place of the *Roman du Vallet a la Cote Mautaillee* in the Prose *Tristan*', in *Studies in Medieval French Language and Literature presented to Brian Woledge*, ed. Sally Burch North (Geneva: Droz, 1988), pp. 17-35.

<sup>13</sup> However, as I have already noted, Traxler argues that he does in fact have an important role in the shorter Version I of the prose *Tristan*. See Chapter Three, note 2.

<sup>14</sup> In all the manuscripts the time lapse between Tristan's avowal to Kahedin of his love for Iseut and the arrival of Brangain is described as a week at the most: however the events of the *Roman du Vallet a la Cote Mautaillee* extend over a longer period than this. This is taken by Curtis to imply that Brunor's adventures could have been a later addition (Curtis, 'A Romance within a Romance', p. 33).

My examination of Daguenet's role in the prose *Tristan* may possibly throw some light on this question. The detail and description surrounding Daguenet in this episode is referred to and relied on by the author to prepare the audience for the second appearance. This implies that the first episode was written either at the same time or previously to the second, but not subsequently. If this were the case, it would be evidence that the *Roman du Vallet a la Cote Mautaillee* was actually integrated into the original prose *Tristan*, and not a later interpolation.

Daguenet's second appearance occurs at §§101-102 of Löseth, §§169-175 of the first volume Ménard's edition. Daguenet's last appearance in the prose *Tristan* occurs slightly later in the romance, equivalent to Löseth §221-225. The episodes in which he takes part occur only in the manuscripts containing version II. Löseth remarks that this section is 'probablement une superfétation postérieure'.<sup>15</sup>

Whilst Ménard's base manuscript for his edition of the prose *Tristan* also belongs to version II, I have discovered two manuscripts in the British Library which also contain this third episode: Royal 20.D.ii and Add. 5474. Whilst neither manuscript provides a full version of the prose *Tristan*, they are specifically noted by

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<sup>15</sup>Löseth, *Analyse*, p. 152, note 3: 'Ici 757 d'Armant et des demoiselles; mais 334 et tous les autres mss. ... donnent une série d'aventures comiques, subies par le roi Marc en Logres....C'est probablement une superfétation postérieure. - Pour la bonne continuation, telle que la donne 757, voy. au §230.'

Ménard as ‘importants’.<sup>16</sup> I have produced my own semi-diplomatic transcription of the episode as it appears in both manuscripts for the purposes of this study.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Tristan*, ed. Ménard, i, p. 16.

<sup>17</sup> See Appendix Three.



## Appendix Three

### *Transcription of Daguenet's third appearance in the prose 'Tristan'*

The third episode in which Daguenet appears in the prose *Tristan*, when he is used to humiliate King Mark in the forest, corresponds to §§221-225 in Löseth's *Analyse*. I was able to discover that it is contained in two manuscripts held by the British Library: Royal 20.D.II., fols 51<sup>r</sup>a, l.16 - 56<sup>r</sup>a, l.27, and Additional 5474, fols 37<sup>r</sup>a, l.21 - 41<sup>v</sup>b, l.6,<sup>1</sup> and for the purposes of this study, I reproduce below the episode as found in these manuscripts.

The main text follows that found in Royal 20.D.II, as this gives the clearer and fuller account of the two, containing some detail which is omitted from Add.5474. Any significant variants to the text of this episode which are found in Add.5474 are noted in the footnotes.<sup>2</sup> This is not intended to be a critical edition of this episode, but merely to provide appropriate access to the material to be studied. To this end, I have made only those changes necessary to make it accessible to the modern reader:

- expanding abbreviations
- separating words

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<sup>1</sup> Both manuscripts date from the fourteenth century: Royal 20.D.II contains Löseth §§171-570, Add. 5474 contains Löseth §§171-568.

<sup>2</sup> I have not, for example, noted variations in spelling or individual words which do not alter the reading of the text.

- inserting punctuation, capitals and diacritics<sup>3</sup>
- distinguishing i/j and u/v

I have noted scribal corrections, particularly expunctions, in the notes. To improve clarity, I have also corrected a few obvious omissions to improve clarity, mainly orthographic, which are clearly signalled in the footnotes, but have not otherwise corrected the text.

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<sup>3</sup> Following the guidelines for the use of accents as reported by M.Roques in 'Établissement de règles pratiques pour l'édition des anciens textes français et provençaux', *Romania*, 52 (1926), 243-249 (pp. 244-246). I also found useful *On Editing Old French Texts*, by Alfred Foulet and Mary Blakely Speer (Laurence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1979).

**London, British Library, Royal 20.D.II., fols 51<sup>r</sup>a, l.16 - 56<sup>r</sup>a, l.27.**

(*fol. 51<sup>r</sup>a, l.16*) Qant li conpangnon entendirent cele paroule il comencent tuit a rire<sup>1</sup> trop durement, et dient que voirement avoit cist geus esté bel. Après demandent de quel part li chevaliers est, et Dynadan dit: ‘De Cornoaille et est venuz nouvellement del roiaume de Cornoaille. Ce n’en sage mie por quele acheison.’ ‘De Cornoaille,’ font il, ‘mal soit il venuz. Certes il puet bien dire que son pechié le moine el roiaume<sup>2</sup> de Logres, et se il a ore esté bien gabez. A cestui point encore le sera il, plus le poons atendre por aucune aventure.’ Ensi vont entre els parlant del roi Marc, et s’en vont gabant. Mes tant i avoit qil n’en cuidoient que ce fust li rois Marc. Il n’en pousent mie croire qil eust le hardement de venir ou reaumes de Logres porce qil savoit bien qil estoit trop durement haiz.

Qant il orent entre els mangié, il monterent erranment et se metent au chemin et se vont soulaçant,<sup>3</sup> parlant des aventures que l’en voit tout jor avenir el roiaume de Logres. Au soir jurent a un chastel qui estoit proprement au roi Artus. Descendirent en la meson a un vavesor qui trop bien les habergia. Tant lor fist de heneur comme il pot.<sup>4</sup> Cele nuit aprist Dynadan que li rois Marc estoit herbergiez en cel chastel mesmes. Assez (*fol. 51<sup>r</sup>b*) pres d’els estoit, chies une veve dame qui a merveille hennoroit volontiers les chevaliers erranz porce qu’ele avoit en la meson le roi Artus .ij. filz qi estoient chevaliers erranz assez proudome.

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<sup>1</sup> Royal: rrire.

<sup>2</sup> 5474: de Cornouaille(l.4)...el roiaume *omitted*.

<sup>3</sup> Royal: soulançant.

<sup>4</sup> 5474: Tant lor fist de heneur comme il pot *omitted*.

Qant Dynadans sot<sup>5</sup> qe li rois Marc<sup>6</sup> estoit herbergiez si pres de lui, il le vet  
 voir. Il devient tout esbahiez, car il cuidoit que ses anemis l'ausent ocis. 'Dynadan,'  
 fet il, 'bien vengniez vos por Deu ! En qele maniere peust vous eschaper de ces  
 chevaliers?'<sup>7</sup> 'Sire,' fet il, 'si m'aïst Dex, il me avint la grengnor merveille del  
 5 monde, car je cuidois qil fusent mes anemis. Non estoient, ainz estoient autres  
 chevaliers qi portoient armes senblables a mes anemis. Et por les armes qil portoient  
 cuidoge de voir qil fusent mi anemi.'

Qant li rois Marc entent ceste novele, il est si durement esbahiz qil n'en set qil  
 doie dire. Or a il honte et vergogne si grant qil n'ose<sup>8</sup> lever la teste. Jamés rencontre  
 10 Dynadans n'osera dire une paroule por la honte de cestui fet. Et Dynadan, qui grant  
 volonté avoit et grant desirier de fere<sup>9</sup> au roi Marc greingnor deshonnor que ceste n'a  
 estez, et<sup>10</sup> encore se il puet en point venir, li dit il : 'Sire, por cestui fet nen veil ge  
 lesier votre compangnie, se il vos plet, devant que nos soiens venuz a Kamaalot.'  
 'Por quoi ? Ma compangnie vos pleise, si m'aïst Dex,' fet li rois Marc, 'de ce sugé  
 15 molt liez et molt me poise de la vilanie que je fis hui envers vos.' 'N'en vos chaut,'  
 fet Dynadans, 'une autre fois le ferez mielz. De ce ne vos sage mie, malgré ge vos  
 comant mes hui adeu car je m'en vois a mon ostel. Demein onques<sup>11</sup> matin revendrai  
 a vos et lors nos i metrons a la voie.' Li rois s'i acorde bien.

Atant s'en revient Dynadans a ses compaignons et lor conta la response del  
 20 chevaliers de Cornoaille. 'Si m'aïst Dex,' fet Agraveins, 'il est mestiers que je li face

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<sup>5</sup> Royal: soit *with i expunctuated*.

<sup>6</sup> 5474 interchanges Mark and Dinadan, but that is clearly incorrect.

<sup>7</sup> 5474: ces chevaliers *replaced with* vos anemis.

<sup>8</sup> Royal: la teste *expunctuated*.

<sup>9</sup> Royal: avoir *expunctuated*.

<sup>10</sup> Royal: greignor deshonnor que ceste n'a estez is repeated in the MS, followed by et gre which is *expunctuated*.

demein rendre toutes les armes et jurer que jamés el roiaume (*fol. 51<sup>v</sup>a*) de Logres n'enportera armes en guise de chevaliers erranz.' La ou il aloient ensi parlant de cestui fet, atant ez vos descendre le filz Dou, qi compaignon de la Table Ronde estoit, et estoit chevaliers assez envoisiez,<sup>12</sup> et bon gabeor avoit en lui. Et sachiez qil  
5 amenoit avec lui le fol le roi Artus, un chevaliers fol dont je vous ai alcune fois conté en ce livre mesmes.

Qant li chevaliers virent Giflet, se il li firent feste et joie, ce ne fet pas a demander, si n'orent granment greingnor joie de lui qil orent de Duganet. A celui firent il toute la joie, porce que trop le soulaçoient et fesoit tout adés la greingnor  
10 folies del monde.<sup>13</sup> Li compaignon demandent a Giflet dont il vient, et il dit qil vient de la meson a un proudome ou li rois l'avoit envoiez,<sup>14</sup> et s'en revet a la cort droit. 'Ensi alons nos a la cort,' dient li autres, 'or nos ennirons tuit enseble.' 'Ce me plet molt,' dit Giflet. Qant il ont grant piece parlé de la cort, il tornerent lor paroule sor autres choses. Messire Yveins dit a Giflet : 'Volez vos oïr une de plus belles  
15 aventures qi pieça mes avenist en cest païs, et avint a Dynadan, qi ci est de la compaignie, d'un chevaliers de Cornoaille?' 'Ha, sire!' fet Giflet, 'dites moi que ce fu.' Et il li conte tout celui fet que je vous ai devisé ça arrieres.

Qant Duganet ot qil parloient del chevaliers de Cornoaille, il se met avant liez et joianz,<sup>15</sup> et paroule teste levee et dit : 'Ou sont li chevaliers de Cornoaille? Leissiez

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<sup>11</sup> Royal: ouques

<sup>12</sup> 5474: chevaliers assez envoisiez *replaced with* mout jolis chevaliers.

<sup>13</sup> 5474: Qant li chevaliers virent Giflet...le greingnor folies del monde *replaced with* Qant li chevalier virrent girflet il li fisent mout grant joie pour chou quil les soulagoit et faisoit les plus grans soties del monde.

<sup>14</sup> Royal: envoieez with second e expunctuated.

<sup>15</sup> 5474: liez et joianz *omitted*.

les venir entre mes<sup>16</sup> meins! Autre chose je ne vos demant.’<sup>17</sup> ‘Duganet,’ fet messire Yveins, ‘volez vos donc joster as chevaliers de Cornoaille?’ ‘Sire, oil, si m’aïst Dex, je n’en vueil que nus s’en entramette. A moi seulement le lesiez.’ Et il comencent tuit arrire qant il oïrent les paroules Daginet, qui se vet ensi porouffrant contre li  
 5 chevaliers de Cornouaille.

‘Sengnors,’ fet messire Yveins, ‘volez vos que je vos die por quoi Duganet se vet si poroff(fol. 51<sup>v</sup>b)rant contre les chevaliers de Cornoaille?’<sup>18</sup> Se vos ne le savez, je le vos dirai. Car je sai bien dont cest grant hardiment li vient. Il avint ja que .ii. chevaliers de Cornouaille, qi compaignon estoient, vindrent el roiaume de Logres. Ce  
 10 ne sai ge mie por que<sup>19</sup> le acheison, mes tant vos sage bien a dire que Duganet les conquist andus et les amena prison andus en la meson le roi Artus. Et je estoie adonc laiencz qant il vindrent. Por ce sage bien que por cele aventure qi avint a monseignor Duganet des chevaliers de Cornoaille, porce qil les a esprouvez et qil les conoit, en paroule il si hardiement.’

15 ‘A non Deu,’ fet Giflet, ‘vos en porriez veoir un grant soulaz et aconplir la volonte Duganet. Et vos dirai<sup>20</sup> en quele maniere. Qant nos devons demein chevauchier, nos le ferons armer des armes a l’un de nos, et cheval ne li convient il mie doner, car il l’a bons. Nos chevaucherons<sup>21</sup> matin, et sitost come nos istrans hors de cest chastel, avant que li chevaliers de Cornoaille s’en aille. Qant nos serons mis  
 20 el chemin, nos chevaucherons a la matinee suef le petit pas, et atendrons tant que li

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<sup>16</sup> Royal: me

<sup>17</sup> 5474: je ne vos demant *replaced with* mes mains ne delirent.

<sup>18</sup> 5474: ‘Sire, oil, si m’aïst Dex... poroffrant contre les chevaliers de Cornoaille’ *replaced with* Savez vous fait girflet pour coi daguenes se hatist si hardiement contre les chevaliers de Cornuaille.

<sup>19</sup> Royal: quoe with o expunctuated.

<sup>20</sup> Royal: demein *expunctuated*.

<sup>21</sup> Royal: chevaucherors.

chevaliers de Cornoaille nos aura ataint qui tost nos atindra, ce sage bien. Et qant il aprochera de nos, nos le mostrerons a Duganet, et ferons<sup>22</sup> qil li lessera corre le cheval et il le fera trop volontiers. Il est si fox qil ne refuseroit l'encontre de nul<sup>23</sup> home del monde. Et savez vos qil en avendra ? Sachiez que li chevaliers de  
 5 Cornoaille tornera en fuie au ferir des esperons tout maintenant qil le verra<sup>24</sup> venir. Miez vient que ensi le feçons, et que il soit torné a desconfiture par Duganet que nos meisions mein en lui.'

Et il s'acordent tuit a ce, et dient qil a trop bien dit, ensic le feront il. Se Duganet puet tant fere que il l'en puisse mener prison en la meson le roi Artus, grant  
 10 joie en fera Tristan et li rois, ancore plus la cort en sera (*fol. 52<sup>r</sup>a*) trop joieuse, et sera de cestui fet biel jeus et bele risee. Lors demandent a Duga[net]<sup>25</sup> cestui fet : 'Il est mestiers que vos demein vos combatiez a .i. chevaliers de Cornoaille.' Et il respont trop joianz et commence adonc ses pames a batre de la grant joie qil avoit. 'Dex volsist ore qe je le trovasse. Je n'en fis, si m'aïst Dex, chose as autres que je  
 15 n'en face pis a cestui.' 'Or perra,' ce dient li conpan[gnons],<sup>26</sup> 'que vos feriez, car demein sans faille l'aurez sans faille entre vos meins.' Grant joie font li conpangnon del chevaliers de Cornoaille, et ancore en feisent il greignor joie se il cuidassent que ce fust li roi Marc.

Qant il hont grant piece solaciez, il ont longement parlé de plusors aventures, il  
 20 se choucent maintenant. Li liz estoient fez et dormirent trusque a l'endemein. A l'endemein bien matin, il se leverent et se font armer vistement, porce que Mordrez,

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<sup>22</sup> Royal: feros.

<sup>23</sup> Royal: nuni with n expunctuated.

<sup>24</sup> Royal: vendra

<sup>25</sup> Royal: Lors demandent aguna a Duga with agun expunctuated and net omitted. 5474 also inserts mesire daguenet que ferons nous.

<sup>26</sup> Royal: gnons omitted.

le frere monsengnor Tristan,<sup>27</sup> estoit .i. peu navrez el costé senestre si que onques<sup>28</sup> le grevoit les<sup>29</sup> armes qil portoit. Por ce li ostent les conpangnons et les baillient a Duganet,<sup>30</sup> et rient si fort que a poi qil n'en pasment. Et sachiez que Duganet le reconfortoit molt durement et disoit 'Sengnors, nen aiez mie doute que sachiez que  
 5 mort est et honiz<sup>31</sup> li chevaliers de Cornoaille. Mestiers est qil me fiance prison ou vueille ou non, avant qil se parte de moi.'<sup>32</sup> 'Duganet,' ce dient li chevaliers, 'or i parra que vos feriez, car ja l'auriez entre vos meins assez tost.'

Atant se partent del chastel et se metent el chamin<sup>33</sup> qi n'i font autre delaïement, et chevauchent le petit pas cele matinee, come cels qi toute vois  
 10 atendoient le roi Marc qil viengne après els. Et sachiez que tout le parlement qil avoient tenu, tut ce que il avoient devisé de Duganet avoit veu Dynadans et seu.<sup>34</sup> Et qant il se furent parti de lor ostel, Dynadans s'en ala droit au roi Marc et trova qil estoit levez et se voloit fere armer vistement, qar tens (*fol. 52<sup>r</sup>b*) est de chevauchier, et il si fet.<sup>35</sup>

15 Et puis demanda a Dynadan : 'Dynadan, dites moi, li conpangnon de la meson le roi Artus ont encore chevauchié?' 'Sire, oil, ja a grant piece,' fet Dynadan, 'il puent estre esloingniez de cest chastel bien .iij. liues engleches. Mes savez vos qui

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<sup>27</sup> 5474: le frere monsengnor Tristan *replaced with* li freres monseignor Gauvains.

<sup>28</sup> Royal: ouques

<sup>29</sup> Royal: conpagnons *expunctuated*.

<sup>30</sup> 5474: et l'arment mout cointement si enrient *inserted*.

<sup>31</sup> 5474: et honiz *omitted*.

<sup>32</sup> 5474: avant qil se parte de moi *omitted*.

<sup>33</sup> Royal: the final n is frequently omitted from this word in this episode.

<sup>34</sup> 5474: Et sachiez que tout le parlement...avoit veu Dynadans et seu *replaced with* et tout qil avoient devise de daguenet avoit dynadan oi et seu.

<sup>35</sup> 5474: vistement...et il se fet *replaced with* qant dynadan vint ver lui il li dist sire diex vos donist boin iour et li rois li respont autreteil sire fait dinadan faites vous armes car tans est de cevauchier et il si fait vistement.



vint hier soir en cest chastel, puis que je fui partiz de vos ?’ ‘Je non voir,’ fet li rois, ‘se vos nel dites. Qui fu il?’ ‘A non Deu,’ fet Dynadan, ‘se fu Lancelot del Lac. Nos estieins hier soir tuit apareillié de chevauchier qant il vint entre nos. Et sachiez veraïement qil est li plus biax chevaliers que je onques veisse, fors seulement

5 Tristan. Tant est cortois et de bones paroules que ce est .i. soulaz que de demorer en sa conpangnie.’<sup>36</sup>

‘Et quel part s’en vet il?’ fet li rois Marc, ‘je avoie oï dire qil estoit a Kamaalot.’<sup>37</sup> ‘Sire, il s’en vet tout droit a Kamaalot.’ ‘Dex aide,’ fet li rois Marc, ‘l’en disoit que il avoit amené Tristan a cort, ore a esté ceste nuit en cest chastel.’<sup>38</sup>

10 ‘Sire,’ fet Dynadan, ‘il n’a mie encore .vi. jors qil se parti de Kamaalot, et s’en parti por une grant besongne. Mes il se retorne a la cort au plus droit qil puet. Je croi qil i sera demain.’

Assez vont entre els .ij. parlant de Lancelot, et al derean dit li rois : ‘Dites moi, quiels armes porte Lancelot? A coi le poroie conostre se ge le trovoie?’ ‘Sire, or

15 sachiez qil porte une armes toute noires, et li escu tout noir au serpent blanc. Teles armes aporta.’<sup>39</sup> Orendroit je ne vos sauroie mielz enseingnier por quoi vos le pusiez mielz conostre.’ Et cez armes qil avoit devisees estoient les armes Mordret qi Duganet le fol porta celui jor.

<sup>36</sup> 5474: que de demorer en sa conpangnie *replaced with* et deduiz destre avec lui.

<sup>37</sup> Royal: et quel part s’en vet il fet li rois Marc *is repeated at this point*; 5474 : je avoie oï dire qil estoit a Kamaalot *omitted*.

<sup>38</sup> 5474: l’en disoit...en cest chastel *replaced with* iou avoie oi dire quil estoit a camaalot des lors que tristan vint a la maison le roi artu et mavoit on dit que lancelot meesmes li avoit mene et ore fu a nuit en cel castel.

<sup>39</sup> 5474: il ersoir au castel et les enporte orendroit *inserted*.

Qant li rois Marc est apareilliez, il n'i fet autre demoree. Il s'en part de laienz et s'en vet entre lui et Dynadan et lor escuiers. Qant il se sont mis el chemin<sup>40</sup> il chevauchent toute cele matinee. Tant font qil viennent a une forest qui estoit apellee Estrange, porce que grant estoit et mer(*fol. 52<sup>v</sup>a*)veilleus et desvoiable durement. Si  
5 estoit assez aventureuse, et mainte foiz i trovoit l'en mante merveilleuse aventure.

Qant il se sont mis en la forest, il n'orent mie granment chevauchié qant il vindrent en une prairie asez petite et bele durement. En cele prairie sordoient plusor fountains. Ou mi leu de cele prairie, en .i. rouchai, s'estoient aresté li chevaliers, et disoient qil atendroient illec le chevaliers de Cornoaille, et verroient coment Duganet  
10 se porroit tenir encontre lui. Li rois Marc l'escousi de molt loing, car il pensoit adés a cels come cil qi ne les pooit oblier.

Qant il les vit arestez devant la roche, il reconoist errament en son cuer que ce sont il sans faille. Mes toutes vois, porce qil le sache mie, le demande il a Dynadans : 'Dynadans, savez vos qui sont cil chevaliers qui sont aresté devant cele  
15 roche?' 'Sire, si m'aïst Dieu,' fit Dinadans, 'je croi que sont li conpangnon de la Table Reonde avec qui je sui hier soir<sup>41</sup> herbergiez. Et si sont il sanz faille, que vos diroge, et nos somes au joster venu. A joster nos convient a els, car por autre chose ne se sont il mie arestez.' 'A non Deu,' fet li rois Marc, 'la joste refus ge. Je n'ai cure del joste;<sup>42</sup> ailoirs lor convient quere joste, car a moi ont il failli.' 'Voire,' ce respont  
20 Dynadan, 'et se vos convient joster a force, q'en<sup>43</sup> diriez vos?' 'Or sachiez,' ce dit li rois Marc, 'que por force ne por amor n'en josterage a els.

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<sup>40</sup> Royal: final n omitted.

<sup>41</sup> 5474: hier soir *replaced with* anuit.

<sup>42</sup> 5474: n'ai cure del joste *replaced with* n'ai nul talent de iouster a eus.

<sup>43</sup> Royal: qn

La ou il parloient ensi de ceste chose, et il les avoient onques<sup>44</sup> aprochiez, atant ez vos que Duganet se parti de la conpannie de chevaliers et s'en comença a venir vers le roi Marc tot le petit pas, en tele maniere comme le conpangnon li avoient dit [et] enseignié, car autrement ne le seust il fere. Et portoit l'escu noir au serpent blanc  
 5 tel comme Dinadan li avoit ensengnié.<sup>45</sup> Qant li rois Marc voit l'escu, il cuide bien que ce soit Lancelot qui vers lui vient, et cuide bien que Dy(*fol. 52<sup>v</sup>b*)nadan l'ait traï. Et lors dit a Dynadan : 'Dynadan, n'est ce Lancelot del Lac qui vient?' 'Oil sire, ce est il sanz faille. Venuz somes a la meslee.' 'Ha, Dynadan!' fet li rois Marc, 'traï m'avez! Je le voi bien que vos lor avez dit que je sui li rois Marc de Cornoaille. Por  
 10 ce sont il ore arestez por moi retenir se il puent. Certes ce fu grant traïson.'

Atant ez vos dels aprochier Duganet li fol, et qant il voit dels aprochier, il lor crie tant comme il puet : 'Dant chevaliers de Cornoaille, se Dex me saust vos estes mort! Qant vos de mes meins eschaperez, jamés n'en verrez Cornoaille!' Qant li rois ot cele paroule, porce qil cuide que ce soit Lancelot del Lac qi ensinc le va menant, il  
 15 n'a mie tant de hardement qil l'atende.<sup>46</sup> Ainz torne d'autre part son frein et hurte le cheval des esperons, et s'en vet si grant erre come il puet del cheval trere.

Qant li autre conpangnon qui estoient arestez delés la ruche voient que li rois Marc s'enfuit si durement, il lievent après lui le cri si grant que jamés si grant n'en orriez di si poi de genz. Il crient après:<sup>47</sup> 'Gardez que il ne vos eschape!' Li rois  
 20 s'enfuit tant comme il puet, trop durement espavantez et esmaiez, tout .i. estroit sentiers de la forest. Mes bien sachiez qil est espavantez a merveilles.<sup>48</sup> Duganet le

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<sup>44</sup> Royal: ouques.

<sup>45</sup> 5474: enseignié *replaced with* devise.

<sup>46</sup> 5474: ensinc leva menant, il n'a mie tant de hardement qil l'atende *replaced with* le menace il ne lose attendre.

<sup>47</sup> Royal: apres *repeated*.

<sup>48</sup> 5474: Mes bien sachiez qil est espavantez a merveilles *omitted*.

vet encaçant molt durement, et qant li compangnon voient que la chose est ensi enforcie a certes, il se metent après<sup>49</sup> porce que il n'en volsissent mie volontiers perdre Duganet,<sup>50</sup> et que li rois s'aperceust qil retornast sor lui.

Li rois s'en fuit trop durement espaventez, si nen se vet<sup>51</sup> pas regardant come  
 5 cil qui n'entent autre chose fors a fouir et a sauver son cors. Duganet l'en chace molt fort et le vet menaçant durement, et est irez vers lui. Il vet jurant tant comme il puet,<sup>52</sup> il est mestiers que il l'ateingne. Li conpangnon s'en vont après criant et gabant, et font une si grant crie<sup>53</sup> que toute la forest (*fol. 53<sup>r</sup>a*) en retentist. Li rois s'en vet tant comme il puet, molt tré bien montez comme de cheval qui avoit a celui point  
 10 trailliee. Molt grant est la noïse et le criz après le roi Marc.<sup>54</sup>

Et la ou li rois s'enfuoit tout le grant chemin<sup>55</sup> de la forest, espaventez molt durement si que a poi qil n'en moroit de peur,<sup>56</sup> il avint adonc une aventure merveilleuse assez bone por soi. Car il trova adonc .i. chevaliers qi s'estoit arestez en mi le chemin, et estoit desor .i. arbre tout a cheval, et ascoltoit toute cel grant crie, et  
 15 s'emeveilleoit que ce pooit estre. La o il estoit arestez en mi chemin, il regarde et voit le roi Marc venir vers lui si durement afuiant comme se il veist la mort devant son oil.

<sup>49</sup> 5474: tant comme il peuent *inserted*.

<sup>50</sup> 5474: ne que li rois se couvechast contre lui *inserted*.

<sup>51</sup> Royal: veut *with* u *expunctuated*.

<sup>52</sup> 5474: iries et iure tant come il puet

<sup>53</sup> 5474: et font une si grant crie *replaced with* si haut.

<sup>54</sup> 5474: de cheval qui avoit a celui point trailliee. Molt grant est la noïse et le criz après le roi Marc *replaced with* cil qui iert monter sour un mout boin cheval.

<sup>55</sup> Royal: final n omitted.

<sup>56</sup> 5474: si que a poi qil n'en moroit de peur *omitted*.

Et li vient al devant molt hardiement, et li dit ‘Sire chevaliers, por quoi fuiez vos? Arestez vos et me contez votre besoingne et je vos creant<sup>57</sup> loialment que je metrai conseil en votre besongne.’ Ne il n’en voit mie ceus qui viennent après lui, car li rois les avoit auques eslongniez. ‘Ha! Sire chevaliers, merci!’ fet li rois, ‘ne me  
5 tenez mie ci por paroules. Je sai bien que vos n’avez mie pooir que vos delivrer me pousiez. Por ce vos pri ge<sup>58</sup> que vos me lesiez aler se il vos plet, car cist cheval sor quoi il siet m’en deliverra miez que vos n’en ferez.’

Li chevaliers est molt irez qant il entent ceste paroule. Si respont molt ireement: ‘Dant chevaliers, se Dex me saut, vos n’estes mie bien cortois ne bien  
10 sages qui ensi petit m’alez prisant. Qui savez vos ore qi je sui?’ ‘Certes,’ fet li rois, ‘je ne le sé voirement, mes tant vos sage bien a dire que cil qi vient après moi est de tel voloir qil n’a orendroit .j. meillor chevaliers el monde, por que vos n’avez a mon escient force ne pooir que vos encontre lui me pousez deffendre.’

‘A non Deu,’ fet li chevaliers, ‘se ce estoit ore Tristan de Cornoaille<sup>59</sup> si vos  
15 enprent je bien a defendre contre son cors. Remanez, car je vuel miez morir sanz faille que vos receviez ja (*fol. 53<sup>r</sup>b*) cop de lui, et de ce vos aseur ge bien que celui que vos tant doutez n’est Tristan ne Lancelot, de ce sui ge tout aseur. Et ce est ce que plus me reconforte<sup>60</sup> de vos aidier a cestui besoing.’ Tant dit li chevaliers au roi Marc. Et tant durement l’aseure que il remaint avec lui ausi come por force, mes trop  
20 est durement espaventez. Et se il cuidast que li chevaliers nen s’en deust a lui corucier il ne remansist en nule maniere.

<sup>57</sup> Royal: creaant with first a expunctuated.

<sup>58</sup> Royal: Por ce que vos pri ge with que expunctuated.

<sup>59</sup> 5474: que on tient ore au meillor chevalier del monde *inserted*.

<sup>60</sup> Royal: reconfonte.

Atant ez vos vers lui venir Duganet tout apresté<sup>61</sup> de la joste. Qant li rois Marc le voit venir il le montre au chevaliers et li dit : ‘Sire, veez ci al mien escient le meillor chevaliers del monde.’ ‘Si m’aïst Dex,’ fet li chevaliers, ‘non est. Je conois bien au chevauchier qil n’est mie bons chevaliers, et encore vos enseng d’une autre

5 chose. Se ge ne li faiz les arçons<sup>62</sup> vuidier orendroit, ne me creez jamés de chose que je vos die.’ Lors s’apareille de la joste et<sup>63</sup> lessa corre a Duganet come cil qui nen cuide mie que ce soit Duganet. Se il cuidast que ce fust il, il n’en ferist contre lui por nule riens del monde. Il le fiert si durement qil le porte tout envers en mi le chanp, et chiet si felonesement qil gist une grant piece a terre ausi comme se il fust mort.

10 Qant li chevaliers l’a abatu, si demanda au roi Marc : ‘Dont chevaliers, avez plus doute d’altrui ! Vos ai ge encore delivré de la grant doute ou vos estiez orendroit ?’<sup>64</sup> ‘Sire, nenil,’ fet li rois Marc, ‘vos avez encore molt plus a fere que vos n’en cuidiez. Après cestui viennent trusque a .vi. conpangnons de la Table Ronde. Por quoi je m’en vueil aler, car je sai bien que encontre els n’en porriez vos durer.’

15 ‘Vasal,’ fet li chevaliers, ‘molt avez grant peor et molt avez en moi poi de sehurté.’<sup>65</sup> Remanez, je le vos lou, si verez que je porrai fere.’ En tel guise remaint li rois Marc qi n’a mie tant de hardement<sup>66</sup> qil osast trepasser le comandement au chevaliers.

Aprés ce n’en demora mie gramment que li conpangnon commen(fol. 53<sup>v</sup>a)cerent a venir li uns avant l’autre, ausi comme il venoient gabant après

20 Duganet. Brandeliz, qi a merveille estoit hardiz chevaliers et prouz, et venoit avant a

<sup>61</sup> 5474: apresté *replaced with* abrieuer et apareiller.

<sup>62</sup> Royal: arcors.

<sup>63</sup> 5474: s’apareille de la joste et *omitted*.

<sup>64</sup> 5474: plus doute d’altrui ...estiez orendroit *replaced with* vous paour dautrui vos ai iou delivre de ce dont vous avies si grant paour.

<sup>65</sup> 5474: hurte *replaced with* fiance.

<sup>66</sup> 5474: qi n’a mie tant de hardement *omitted*.

touz les autres. Qant il vit le cheval Duganet tut estaier<sup>67</sup> en mi le chemin,<sup>68</sup> il aperçoit bien que Duganet est abatuz. Si pense que por lor amonestement avoit enprise ceste folie.

Qant li chevaliers qi li rois Marc avoit receu voit venir Brandaliz, il dimande  
 5 au roi : ‘Dant chevaliers, cist qui vient de ci, est il de vos enemis?’ ‘Sire, oïl,’ fet li rois Marc, ‘il en est voirement.’ Li chevaliers n’i atent plus, ainz lesse corre en son venir et le fiert si durement qil n’a force ne pooir qil en selle remaingne, ainz vole<sup>69</sup> del cheval a terre. De tant li avint il bien qil n’ot autre mal que del chaoir. Qant li chevaliers voit Brandeliz a terre, il ne le regarde plus, ainz s’en passe outre<sup>70</sup> et dit  
 10 au roi Marc : ‘Confortez vos, que de cestui este vos delivrés.’ ‘Sire,’ fet li rois, ‘vos dites voirs. Dex volsist ore que vos eusiez autant fet de touz les autres.’

Qant messire Yvein, le fils au roi Urien, qi après Brandeliz venoit, le voit a terre abatuz, il est dolenz et corouciez come de celui a qui il voloit grant bien. Et tout fust messire Yvein<sup>71</sup> uns de plus amesurez chevaliers del la meson le roi Artus, si  
 15 n’est il mie ore si amesurez qil n’en die<sup>72</sup> qil venchera Brandeliz ou il partira a sa honte. Lors s’adrece vers le chevaliers qi Brandeliz avoit abatuz, et li lesse corre por lui ferir.<sup>73</sup> Et cil qi de riens ne le doute se drece vers lui per destai et le fiert si en son venir qil abat lui et son cheval. Et fu messire Yveins molt durement grevez de celui

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<sup>67</sup> 5474: estraier.

<sup>68</sup> Royal: n *omitted*.

<sup>69</sup> Royal: voile.

<sup>70</sup> 5474: ainz s’en passe outre *omitted*.

<sup>71</sup> 5474: et corouciez come de celui a qui il voloit grant bien. Et tout fust messire Yvein *replaced with* encore soit il.

<sup>72</sup> 5474: si n’est il mie ore si amesurez qil n’en die *replaced with* si dit il.

<sup>73</sup> 5474: et li lesse corre por lui ferir *omitted*.

cheoir, car li chevax li chei sus le cors, si que il gist en mi la place ansi comme en pasmesons<sup>74</sup> qil n'a pooir de soi lever.

Qant messire Yveins fu abatus en tele maniere comme je vo cont, atant ez vos après lui venir Ossonein Cuer Hardi, tout erragé de mal(*fol. 53<sup>v</sup>b*)talent. Qant il voit  
 5 ensi ses conpangnons abatuz, qant il les voit a terre gesir, il n'i fet autre delaïement, ainz lesse corre au chevalier qui li revient la lance bassie et li done si grant cop qil le porte a terre ausi come il avoit fet les autres. Lors dit bien li rois Marc a soi meismes que voirement est il proudome et bons chevalier. Il n'en vit pieça si bons fereor de lance con cist est.

10 Qant li .iiij.<sup>75</sup> conpangnons qi après els venoient<sup>76</sup> voient ceste aventure, il s'arestent en mi le chemin ausi comme toz esbahiz, et dient que ce est une de greignor merveille que il veisent pieça, mes bien est proudom li chevaliers et de grant pooir qi si legierement a abatuz cez .iiij. chevaliers. 'Sengnor,' fet Giflez li filz Dou, 'li chevaliers est si proudom come vos veez, et por la proesce que je voi en lui  
 15 n'en poroge croire qil ne fust de noz conpangnons de la Table Reonde. Envoions a lui alcun de nos valez et sachons se il est de la meson le roi Artus. Et se il en est, si lesons atant ceste follie, et se il non est, nos ferons nos poors de vengier la honte a nos conpangnons qil a abatus que nos i partons.'<sup>77</sup>

A ce s'acordent tuit. Il envoient .i. de lor escuiers au chevaliers. Qant li valez  
 20 este venuz a lui, il li dist sanz saluer le : 'Sire, cil chevalier qui la sont vos prient qe vos lor faciez a savoir se vos estes de la meson le roi Artus ou non, puis auront bon conseil.' Sor ce li chevaliers respont atant et dist : 'Or lor poez dire que bien sachent

<sup>74</sup> Royal: epasmesons; 5474: enpasmisons.

<sup>75</sup> 5474: doi.

<sup>76</sup> Royal: venoit; 5474: venoient.

<sup>77</sup> 5474: car nous i avons part.



que je n'en sui mie de la meson le roi Artus. Por ce, se ge nel sui, ne lerage pas, porce que je ne me defende encontre els se ge onques<sup>78</sup> puis et se il m'asaillent.'

Li valet se part atant del chevaliers et s'en revient as .iiij. conpangnons et lor dit : 'Il vos mande que il n'est mie de la meson le roi Artus.' Et il sont ausi comme  
 5 tous esbahiz, et dient entra els : 'Dex qi puet il estre?' 'Et nos que chaut?' fet Agraveins, 'Qi que il soit, il est bien notre anemis. Veoir le poez tout clerement. Por ce ferons au mielz que nos porons. (*fol. 54<sup>r</sup>a*) Je endroit moi voil mielz sanz doute qil m'abate, se mielz n'en puis, ausi comme il a fet mes conpangnons, que je ne face mon pooir de vengier lor honte et lor anui.' Lors se tret avant et dist : 'Je veil avoir  
 10 ceste joste premiere coment qil m'en doie avenir.' Lors hurte le cheval des esperons et s'en vet vers le chevaliers. Cil li revient ausi briant come faudre, et le fiert en son venir si roidement qil<sup>79</sup> fet de lui tout autant come il avoit fet des autres.

Qant li autre voient cest cop, il sont si tristes et si dolens de cestui fet qil n'en savent que doivent dire. 'Sainte Marie,' fet Giflez, 'ce que sera ? Come cist proudome  
 15 est bons chevaliers et comme il a tré grant pooir! Dex aide! Ce que puet estre? Si m'aïst Dex, de cest fet n'en sage que dire.' Et cez paroules dit il tot larmoiant des eulz, et si avoit le cuers si gros et si enflé qil n'a pooir de plus dire.

Que vos diroge? En tele maniere come li chevaliers avoit abatuz les autres abati il le remenant. Et qant il les ot toz ensi abatuz il s'en torna vers le rois Marc et  
 20 li dit: 'Sire chevaliers, vos est il avis que vos soiez ancore delivrés de cest encontre dont vos aviez ore si grant peure?' 'Sire,' fet li rois Marc, 'voirement en suge bien delivrés, Deu merci et la vostre, mes or n'en sage mie tré bien que je doie fere. Car se cil chevaliers me trouvent sanz vos il me feront honte et vergoingne et me metront a mort sanz doute por la honte que vos lor avez fete por moi.'

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<sup>78</sup> Royal: ouques.

‘Dites moi,’ fet li chevaliers, ‘quel part baez vos a aler?’<sup>80</sup> ‘Sire,’ fet il, ‘je vorroie estre en la meson le roi Artus, car la aige .j. poi a fere.’ ‘A non Deu,’ fet li chevaliers, ‘de ce vos est il bien avenuz. Trusque la vos ferage conpangnie. Si come je cuit, autresi vueil je celle part aler.’ ‘A non Deu,’ fet li rois Marc, ‘de vostre  
 5 conpangnie suge molt liez.’<sup>81</sup> Or chevauchons donc ensenble.’ Et il s’acordent a ceste chose.

Il se metent al che(fol. 54<sup>b</sup>)min.<sup>82</sup> Atanz ez vos après els venir Brandeliz, qi remonte estoit sor son cheval. Et qant il les a ataint, il dit au chevaliers : ‘Sire, avant que vos de nos departiez, vos vorge prier por cortesie que vos me deissiez qui vos  
 10 estes, et sachiez que autre si grant bonté come ceste est vos porage bien fere.’ ‘Certes,’ fet li chevaliers, ‘puis que vos volez savoir qi je sui, je vos en dirai une partie. Or sachiez que je sui .j. chevaliers erranz, qui vois aventures querant de ior en ior<sup>83</sup> ausi comme<sup>84</sup> vos meimes fet.’

‘Certes,’ fet Brandaliz, ‘or ne m’avez vos riens apris. Je sai bien que vos estes  
 15 chevaliers, et je vorroie ore estre autretielx. Ancore vos prige por cortesie que vos me diez votre non.’ ‘Or sachiez,’ fet li chevaliers, ‘que a cestui point n’en poez vos riens savoir de mon estre, plus<sup>85</sup> que dit vos en ai. Chevalier sui non mie si bons comme mestiers me seroit.’ Lors s’en passe outre qi ni fet autre delaiement. Et Brandeliz s’en retorne a ses conpangnons dolent et coruciez de grant maniere de ce

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<sup>79</sup> 5474: le fiert en son venir si roidement qil *omitted*.

<sup>80</sup> Royal: fet il je vorroie estre li chevaliers *with* il je vorroie estre *expunctuated*.

<sup>81</sup> 5474: autresi vueil je celle part aler... suge molt liez *omitted*.

<sup>82</sup> Royal: n *omitted*.

<sup>83</sup> 5474: de ior en ior *replaced with* adventures.

<sup>84</sup> Royal: comuosme *with* uos *expunctuated*.

<sup>85</sup> Royal: puls.

qil n'en pooit conostre le chevaliers. Trop volontiers le coneust se il peust estre por la haute chevalerie de lui.

Ensi chevauche li rois Marc en la compaignie del chevaliers, molt liez et joianz de ceste aventure qi avenue li estoit a cestui point. Tout celui jor chevauche li rois  
 5 Marc trusque hore de none, pensant toutes vois molt merueilleusement, si que il paroît bien a son senblant qil n'estoit mie trop joianz mes pensis outre mesure. Il n'en dit mot, ne n'en fet chiere ne semblant qil ait joie ne laesce, ainz moustre bien apertement qil ait le cuer triste et dolent. Si<sup>86</sup> chevauche la teste encline et basse vers terre, ne onques<sup>87</sup> n'en dit mot ne ne regarde ça ne la, ainz a le eulz ver terre. Et<sup>88</sup> de  
 10 tant s'aperçoit bien li rois Marc que li chevaliers vet souspirant au chief de piece molt perfondement, et se plaint baset, mes nul mot del monde non dit(*fol. 54<sup>v</sup>a*) que li rois Marc peust entendre.<sup>89</sup>

Li rois Marc est pensis si durement qil n'en set qil doie fere ne dire, car il voit bien apertement que li chevaliers est a maleise outre mesure. Volontiers le  
 15 reconfortast se il peust et il osast, mes il n'ose, car ce ne seroit mie grant sens d'oster li chevaliers de son penser, car tost en porroit acoillir sa haine et sa male volanté.<sup>90</sup> Por ce se test il et regarde soventes foiz le contement del chevaliers qi tiex est qil n'en senble que il por nule aventure del monde<sup>91</sup> se doie reconforter.

Ensi pensis et ausi triste, la teste encline vers terre,<sup>92</sup> chevauche li chevaliers le  
 20 petit pas del cheval sanz soi reposer, trusque tant que ore de none est passee. Lors

<sup>86</sup> 5474: qil n'estoit mie trop joianz ... le cuer triste et dolent. Si *replaced with* iriez il.

<sup>87</sup> Royal: ouques

<sup>88</sup> 5474: ne ouques n'en dit mot ne ne regarde ça ne la, ainz a le eulz ver terre. Et *omitted*.

<sup>89</sup> 5474: que li rois Marc peust entendre *omitted*.

<sup>90</sup> 5474: et sa male volanté *omitted*.

<sup>91</sup> 5474: por nule aventure del monde *omitted*.

<sup>92</sup> 5474: quil ne fait nul samblant de joie *inserted*.

avint que aventure les aporta devant une molt bele fountaine qi sordoit entre .ij. grant arbres, et estoit cil leus trop biax et trop diletables ou la fountaine sordoit. Qant li chevaliers vint pres de la fontaine il se redrece la test et comença a regarder tout entor soi. Tout maintenant qil s'aperçuit de la fontaine,<sup>93</sup> il dit au roi Marc : 'Sire, vos  
 5 plet il que ne descendons et nos reposons un poi? Nos avon hui asez travailliee por nos reposer une piece del jor.' 'Sire, a votre comandement,' fet li rois Marc, 'descendons puis que il vos plet.' Lors descent devant la fontaine et font de lor chevax penser au mielz que il puent. Li chevaliers fet oster son hiaume de sa teste et abatre sa ventaille et alegier de ses armes por reson, non mie en tele maniere que se il  
 10 eust besong qil n'en fust tost armez.

Qant il est ensi alegiez de ses armes come je vos cont, il<sup>94</sup> dist a un de vallez le roi Marc: 'Va t'en tout droit cest chemin<sup>95</sup> jusque a un petit tertre que trouveras. Ci devant tu trouveras la .i. molt bel recet o une dame maint. (*fol. 54<sup>v</sup>b*) Di li<sup>96</sup> de la moie part qu'ele m'envoie a mangier si celeement que nus de laienz nel sache; nen ne  
 15 vueil que nus viengne ceste part, si chier comme il hont m'amor, car tost retournerai la se Dex plet.' 'Sire,' fet li vallet, 'coment avez non ou a queles ensengnes vos porrai e la dame conoistre?' 'Biex amis,' fet li chevaliers, 'si tost comme tu li dirais que li Chevaliers a la Beste Glatissant li fet ceste requeste, ele t'aconplira ta volanté plus volontiers que nule dame de chest<sup>97</sup> monde. Ele doit volontiers fere come cele qi  
 20 est<sup>98</sup> ma dame et ma mere. Or t'en va tout cest sentier, car remerra la tout droit sanz faille.'

<sup>93</sup> 5474: il se redrece la test ... s'aperçuit de la fontaine *omitted*.

<sup>94</sup> 5474: Qant il est ensi alegiez de ses armes come je vos cont, il *replaced with* puis

<sup>95</sup> Royal: n *omitted*.

<sup>96</sup> Royal: dil

<sup>97</sup> Royal: chest *with h expunctuated*.

<sup>98</sup> 5474: Ele doit volontiers fere come cele qi est *replaced with* car cest.

Li vallez se part atant del chevaliers qi n'i fet autre delaiement, et s'en vet la droit ou hom<sup>99</sup> li comanda.<sup>100</sup> Li chevaliers remest illec. Li rois Marc ot bien entendu ce que li chevaliers ot dit au vallet. Il vet durement pensant, mes il ne puet savoir qui li chevaliers est. Il aust<sup>101</sup> oï parler de Pallamedes il l'aust<sup>102</sup> tost reconeu, mes de  
 5 cestui sornon ne savit il riens. Por quoi il ne se tient pas moins esbahi de cest chevaliers et de son<sup>103</sup> afere qil fesoit devant. Assez i pense durement, mes ce ne li valt riens.

Li vallet s'en vet molt grant erre trusque au tertre que li chevaliers li avoit dit. Il descent maintenant devant la porte et baille a un des vallez son cheval a garder, et  
 10 trove li reçoit molt plus bel et molt plus riches que li chevaliers ne li avoit dit.<sup>104</sup> Puis demanda ou la dame de laienz estoit et cil de laienz saillirent avant maintenant et demandent : 'Biex amis, a qi est vos qi la dame de caienz demandez?' 'Ne vos chaut a qi je soie, mes fetes moi parler a cele qi je demant.' Et il le menent maintenant en une chanbre de laienz qui molt estoit belle et riche,<sup>105</sup> et trove la dame seant sor .i. lit  
 15 qui avoit en sa conpangnie dames et damoiseles a grant planté.

Qant li (*fol. 55<sup>r</sup>a*) vallet conoist la dame, il s'agenoille devant lui et li dist basset en l'oreille toutes les paroules que li chevaliers li mande, tout en tel maniere come il les avoit mandees. La dame comença a plorer qant ele entendit cele nouvelle, et puis dit tot en plorant : 'Ha, sire Dex! Qant verrage l'oure que je porai veoir mon

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<sup>99</sup> Royal: hem

<sup>100</sup> Royal: comandeia with e expunctuated.

<sup>101</sup> 5474: eust.

<sup>102</sup> 5474: leust.

<sup>103</sup> Royal: afaire *expunctuated*.

<sup>104</sup> 5474: Il descent maintenant devant la porte ... plus riches que li chevaliers ne li avoit dit *omitted*.

<sup>105</sup> 5474: chanbre de laienz qui molt estoit belle et riche *omitted*.

chier filz, la meillor porteure et la plus haut que<sup>106</sup> dame de mon afere portast?  
 Onques ! Ha, Dex! Come il fet grant pechié qant il ne me vient veoir plus sovent qil  
 n'en fet et que il ne me<sup>107</sup> reconforte de sa venue. Li pules<sup>108</sup> et sa bone renomee me  
 reconforte de lui, mes il non. Se ge le peusse ausi sovent vooir et conjoïr et fere feste  
 5 de son chier cors come je faiz de ses autres freres, je di bien que je feuse bien la plus  
 beneuree dame del monde. Mes je ne le voi ne ne regart, dont je ai le cuer triste et  
 dolent toutes les foiz qil m'en sovient.'

Qant celes qi laienz estoient entendirent cest parlement, ele conoserent tantost  
 que ce estoit Pallamedés dont la dame paroule. Si sont toutes molt en grant de  
 10 domander ou Pallamedés est. La dame lor respont: 'Il n'est mie molt loing de ci, mes  
 chiers filz. Certes volontiers le verroie, mes encontra sa proiere n'en feroie riens ne  
 por mort ne por vie. Puis qil velt que je ci remaingne, je remandré a ceste foiz.' Lors  
 baille a l'escuiers tout ce que mestiers li estoit. Et cil s'en part tent et prent congié a  
 cels de laienz, ne il n'a laienz si hardi qui ose aler après lui por veoir Pallamedés.  
 15 Car la dame le defent bien come cele qui molt chierement l'amoit. Li vallet s'en part  
 errament, qant il a tout ce receu por quoi il avoit esté envoié.

Tant fet qil revient a la fontaine et salue Pallamedés de par sa mere et li conta  
 toutes les paroules qil avit oies de lui. Pallamedés n'en respont riens, ançois mangue  
 et se conforte, mes toutes vois est pensis si durement que jamés n'en verriez .i.  
 20 chevaliers si pensis. (*fol. 55<sup>b</sup>*) Ne il ne demande onques<sup>109</sup> au roi Marc qil est ne  
 dont il vient, qi pense toute vois.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Royal: doama *expunctuated*.

<sup>107</sup> Royal: ne

<sup>108</sup> Royal: pluples.

<sup>109</sup> Royal: ouques.

<sup>110</sup> 5474: qi pense toute vois *replaced with* li rois march est pensis de l'autre part.

Qant il orent mangié, li rois Marc, qui un poi estoit travailiez de chevalchier et del travail qil avoit soffert, s'endort tredevant la fountaine. Qant Pallamedés le voit endormi, il se fet armer errament et vient a son cheval et monte, puis dit aus escuiers: 'Sengnor, je m'en vois de ci puis que votre sire n'en fet comme chevaliers. Dite li de  
 5 moie part que je ne vueil plus tenir sa conpangnie ne il ne m'est pas avis au senblant que je ai veu en lui qil ait gramment chevauchié comme chevaliers erranz.' Lors s'en part qil n'en dit plus, et s'en vet au traver de la forest qil n'en torna point vers le recoit sa mere. Ensi s'en vet Pallamedés, en lesse le roi Marc delés la fointeine.

Il n'a pas gramment chevauchié qant li rois Marc s'esveilla,<sup>111</sup> nen sai por quoi, ou  
 10 porce que li chevax comencerent a henir ou porce qil n'endormoit pas a ese. Qant li rois Marc se fu esveilliez, il se dreça en son estant et comença a regarder tout en tor lui, et qant ne<sup>112</sup> il voit Pallamedés il en devient touz esbahiz. Lors dit a ses escuiers: 'Ou ala li bons chevaliers?' 'Sire,' ce dient il, 'il s'en vet orendroit. Si nos dit teles paroules et si nos comanda que nos le vos deisions.' 'Se Dex m'aïst,' fet li rois Marc,  
 15 'il ot droit se il me blasme de cestui fet. Qant je avoie avec moi si bons chevaliers come cestui est, et je après li fesoie si povre conpangnie, touz li monde m'en devoit blasmer. Et puis qil est de moi departiz, ore est mestiers que je le truisse et je le troverai tost, ce sage bien, car il n'est mie encore loing.' 'Sire, vos dite verité,' font li vallez.

20 Qant il a dite ceste paroule, il se fet errament armer. Qant il est armez, il dit a sez escuiers: 'Atendez moi tant que je revienigne. Car je revendrai maintenant se ge le truis ou se ge ne le truis.'<sup>113</sup> 'Sire, a votre commandement,' ce dient li vallez. Li rois demanda quel part li chevaliers ala qant il se parti, et il li mostrent ausi come

<sup>111</sup> Royal: esveillea *with third e expunctuated*.

<sup>112</sup> Royal: ne in margin.

<sup>113</sup> 5474: ou se ge ne le truis *omitted*.

(*fol. 55<sup>v</sup>a*) il s'en vet. Li rois Marc s'en vet ausi, et il avient alcune foiz qil vet trovant les esclois de Pallamedés, et autre foiz n'en truove point.

Et ce le fet aler ça et la. Car ensi avoit alé Pallamedés come cil sanz faille qi tant durement pensoit qil ne savoit quel part il aloit. Tant vet li rois Marc en tele  
 5 maniere ça et la qil pert del tout la trece de Pallamedes et les esclos, et lors n'en set qil doie fere, ou d'aler avant ou de retorner. Se il vet avant, il porra molt tost sorvenir a ce que il n'en set pas la forest come cil qi onques<sup>114</sup> mes n'i avoit esté, et la forest estoit sanz doute grant et desvoiablez. Et la cose qi plus li anuoit,<sup>115</sup> ce estoit la nuit qi li sorvenoit qui ja s'aloit meslant au jor. Li rois, qi n'avoit conseil fors que de soi,  
 10 dit qil retornera huimés, car bien n'est tens. Lors se met au retorner, ce li est avis, mes de ce est il deceus, car qant il cuide retorner a sa masnie, il s'en vet esloignant plus et plus.

Ensi chevauchant tout adés, forvoiant ça et la,<sup>116</sup> tant que la nuit est venue escure et noire qi li fet si grant destorbier qil n'en set quel<sup>117</sup> part il doie aler. Lors  
 15 s'areste enmi le chemin<sup>118</sup> de la forest<sup>119</sup> ascouter molt ententivement por savoir se il poust oïr nul home del monde qui de riens le seust asenner la ou il estoit. En tele maniere il ot une voiz asez pres de lui, ce li senble, qui s'aloit plaignant et dementant. Il se tret cele part tout suef por savoir se il porroit oïr celle voiz dont il avoit orendroit oï le son. Et porce qil ne l'ot plus, il s'areste tout coiemment, si ot  
 20 adonc autre foiz la voiz del home qi se plaingnoit molt merueilleusement, et il s'en vet adonc cele part molt seurement.

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<sup>114</sup> Royal: ouques

<sup>115</sup> 5474: Et la cose qi plus li anuoit *omitted*.

<sup>116</sup> 5474: tout adés, forvoiant ça et la *replaced with* toute jour.

<sup>117</sup> Royal: que

<sup>118</sup> Royal: chemi

<sup>119</sup> Royal: de la forest repeated and expunctuated.



Quant il est pres, il descent de son cheval et l'atache a un arbre et pense bien que ce soit chevaliers qui ensi se plaint. Et por ce ne le voldroit il mie nuire de nule chose qil peust, si s'en vet adonc pres de lui au plus coïement qil puet fere, car il n'en vousist mie que cil s'apreceust de sa venue. Quant il vient onques<sup>120</sup> pres (*fol.*

5 55<sup>v</sup>*b*) de lui, il voit que ce est un chevaliers armez, et tant i avoit voirement qil avoit li haume en la teste. Li chevaliers estoit asis delés une roche desos .i. arbre, et se plaingnoit molt durement et gitoit souventes foiz soupirs de cuer perfont. Orendroit est liez per senblant, orendroit est coruciez, si estrangement que a poi qil n'en muert d'ire et de duel.

10 Et or siet, or est en estant, orendroit li change li vers car il n'en demoure mie gramment en celui estat. Se il aloit orendroit riant, or plore si durement, et se maldit l'oure qil fu nez si que jamés n'en verriez a .j. chevaliers si grant duel fere que cil n'en face encore greingnor.<sup>121</sup> Et sachiez que li rois Marc estoit pres de lui, a moins de .ij. lances, et si ne le veoit il mie, tant entendoit merveilleusement a son fet qi si  
15 estoit estrange come je vos di, qe une oure rioit o une autre ploroit, puis s'aloit reconfortant, mes cil reconfort n'en duroit mie longement ainz<sup>122</sup> retornoit a un autre chose.

Quant li rois Marc voit cele chose, il en devient si hesbahiz qil n'en set qil doie dire.<sup>123</sup> Il le regarda<sup>124</sup> grant piece en sozriant. Quant il l'a grant piece regardé, il dit a  
20 soi meemes: 'Dex aide, ce que puet estre por foi ! Or puis je bien dire que cest est li plus desuez chevaliers de touz ceus dont je oïsse onques<sup>125</sup> parler. Or rit, or plore, or

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<sup>120</sup> Royal: ouques

<sup>121</sup> 5474: que cil n'en face encore greingnor *omitted*.

<sup>122</sup> Royal: aniz

<sup>123</sup> 5474: hesbahiz qil n'en set qil doie dire *omitted*.

<sup>124</sup> Royal: regardea *with e expunctuated*.

<sup>125</sup> Royal: ouques

moine duel! Dex aide!<sup>126</sup> Ce que peut estre? Je croi qil a del tout perdu son sens. Je n'en sai que je en doie dire. Onques<sup>127</sup> mes, puis que je fui nez, je n'en vi .j. chevaliers de si faite maniere come cist est.'

Molt vet li rois regardant li chevaliers. Il le tient a trop estrange chose son fet et  
 5 son contenment. Onques<sup>128</sup> mes, se Dex l'aïst, il n'en vit onques<sup>129</sup> mes une si estrange aventure come cest li senble.<sup>130</sup> Car orendroit li est avis que li chevaliers ait alcun sens et aucune resons, orendroit li senble que ce soit li plus fox del monde. Tant le voit en deverses manieres qil n'en set qil en doie dire, ou il soit fous o il soit sages. Ensi paroule li rois Marc a soi meemes<sup>131</sup> del contenment qil voit fere au chevaliers,  
 10 si coiemet que li chevaliers qi estoit assez pres (*fol. 56<sup>r</sup>a*) de lui ne le voit mie. Li chevaliers ne le voit mie, ainz cuide bien qil soit molt long de gent et que il n'ait nul home pres de lui. Et por ce fet il tel contenment e tel senblant e tel chiere come li cuers l'aporte. Mes atant lesse ore li contes a parler de cestui fet et de ses aventures qi i avindrint.<sup>132</sup>

15 En ceste partie dit li contes que qant li conpangnon de la Table Reonde furent ensi abatu per Pallamedés come je vos ai conté, et Brandaliz ot ensi parlé a lui et il dit qil n'en puet autre chose enprendre ne que cil ne li velt plus dire de son estre fors tant que chevaliers erranz estoit, il torne a ses conpangnons, esbahiz durement de ce qil les avoit toz en tele maniere veuz deschevauchier por le cors d'un chevaliers. Ne

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<sup>126</sup> Royal: Dex adie

<sup>127</sup> Royal: ouques

<sup>128</sup> Royal: ouques

<sup>129</sup> Royal: ouques

<sup>130</sup> 5474: Ouques mes, se Dex l'aïst ... aventure come cest li senble *omitted*.

<sup>131</sup> 5474: a soi meemes *omitted*.

<sup>132</sup> 5474: et de ses aventures qi i avindrint *replaced with* et retourne a dinadan pour conter partie de son fait et de ses aventures qui li avinrent.

cestui fet n'en puest il pas croire en nule<sup>133</sup> maniere se il ne l'aust<sup>134</sup> veuz. Qant il est a ses conpangnons venuz, il les trova si hesbaiz et si corruciez qil n'en set qil en doie dire.

Et qant il le voient ensi a els retorner, il li dient : 'Brandeliz, or nos dites qui  
 5 chevaliers est qi ensi nos a abatuz ?' 'Sengnor,' fet il, 'se Dex me saut, je ne vos en sei asenner. Ce poise moi molt chierement.' Lors lor conte le respons et la paroule qil avoit trové. E li<sup>135</sup> chevaliers, qant il entendent ceste response, se il estoient devant irez, or sont il assez plus. Molt se plaignent d'anui et de corruz.<sup>136</sup> Il n'en savoit qil devient dire. Il sont tuit ausi come forsené de corruz. Agravein, qi tant est  
 10 irez que a poi qil n'a rage de duel, dit oiant touz : 'Sengnor chevaliers, honiz somes. Nos n'aurons jamés honeur qant cist fet nos est avenuz ne pris, n'en avons aucun vengeance. Malement some avillié certes.' 'Ce est voirs,' ce dient le autre, 'onques<sup>137</sup> (*fol. 56<sup>b</sup>*) mes plus grant desheneur n'avint a tel genz come nos somes ci.' Molt sont dolent et corucié tuit li conpangnon.

15 De cestui fet se plaing Duganet trop fort,<sup>138</sup> car il dit que a poi que li chevaliers ne li a le col ronpu et le braiz. Il breit et crie si durement come se il fust a mort feruz, si que por son crier et por son brere se reconforterent li conpangnon, et s'en rient trop durement. Et ce est une chose qi les esmuet en joie et en soulaz et qui les oste de cel pensé dont lor cuer estoit a maleise, la u il tenoient entre els parlamanz del

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<sup>133</sup> Royal: enule

<sup>134</sup> 5474: leust.

<sup>135</sup> Royal: El

<sup>136</sup> 5474: Molt se plaignent d'anui et de corruz *replaced with* mout lor anuiez sont ausi com foursene de courouch.

<sup>137</sup> Royal: ouques.

<sup>138</sup> 5474: De cestui fet se plaing Duganet trop fort *replaced with* de cel fait se plaint durement.

chevaliers et il s'aloient gabant et riant de la grant plainte que Duganet fesoit et de ce qil estoit si durement desconfortez.<sup>139</sup>

Atant es vos entre els venir Dynadan, qi ancore n'en savoit riens de toutes ce jostes qil avoient fetes ne de l'aventure qui esi lor estoit avenue. Qant il est venuz  
 5 trusque a els et<sup>140</sup> il les voit touz descenduz, il s'en merveille que ce est, que il le trove a merveille por senblant desconfortez. Si s'areste il entre els ensi com tuz esbaiz, si pense qil ont eu alcu corruz. Por ce tret il Mordret a une part qi desarmez estoit, ensi come je vos ai conté ça arieres,<sup>141</sup> si li demande a Mordret : 'Que ont cil chevaliers? Il m'est avis qil ne sont si joianz come il estoient ore qant il se partirent  
 10 de moi.' 'Coment, sire,' fet Mordret, 'n'en savez vos mie l'aventure qui nos est avenue? La plus merveilleuse, se Dex me saut,<sup>142</sup> dont je oïsse pieça parler.'

'Certes, je non,' fet Dynadan, 'je non, car je veng orendroit ci. Je demorai arrieres vos por parler a .j. chevaliers qi je trovai la devant qui venoit de Kamaalot et me conta noveles de la cort. Mes dites moi, se Dex vos saut, quele aventure vos  
 15 avint ?' 'Puis que vos partistes de moi, sire,' fet Mordret, 'puis que vos ne le savez, je le vos dirai.' Lors conta coment li rois Marc trova .j. chevaliers (*fol. 56<sup>r</sup>a*) qui le prist a garantir contre les conpangnons, et coment<sup>143</sup> il josta et touz les abati por fine force. 'Et de ceste aventure,' fet Mordret, 'en somes nos si desconfortez come vos poez veoir. Si n'est mie merveille se il nos en poise, car d'une plus merveilleuse  
 20 aventure n'oïst vos parler pieça mes que si tost avenist a tielz chevaliers come ci sont.' 'Si m'aïst Dex,' fet Dynadan, 'vos dites voirs.'

<sup>139</sup> 5474: et de ce qil estoit si durement desconfortez *omitted*.

<sup>140</sup> 5474: Qant il est venuz trusque a els et *omitted*.

<sup>141</sup> 5474: ensi come je vos ai conte ca arieres *omitted*.

<sup>142</sup> 5474: se Dex me saut *omitted*.

<sup>143</sup> Royal: comen

De ceste novele est Dynadan si merveilleuz qil n'en set qil en doie dire. Il se  
test et ne demande mi gramment, car il voit touz les compangnons si tristes et si  
corruciez que jamés por senblant n'en fuserent reconforté se n'en fust Duganet qui ensi  
se vet plaignant de ce qil avoit esté ensi feruz, qi crie et bret come forsenez et dit qil  
5 est feruz permi le cors. Et puis reedit qil n'en set en quel endroit il est feruz : or  
moustre el cors, or mostre son cousté, mes il n'en set mie en quel leu. Il ploure et fet  
le greignor duel del monde, si que li compangnon s'en reconfortent trop durement et  
entendent de tout a sa plainte et lessent lor duel estre atant. (*fol. 56<sup>r</sup>a*, l.27)

## Appendix Four

### *The False Guinevere episode*

This is a summary of the False Guinevere episode taken from the cyclic Prose *Lancelot* as contained in *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.1, III, §1-IX, §37, and which provides the context for the episode in which Daguenet appears in the *Prophécies de Merlin*. The False Guinevere episode also appears in the non-cyclic prose *Lancelot*. However, certain elements are missing from the non-cyclic version which rule it out as a source for the episode in the *Prophécies*. In the non-cyclic version, Lancelot's defeat of the three knights leads directly to the trial and condemnation of Bertelais and the False Guinevere. The true Queen is not exiled to Sorelois, and neither Bertelais nor the False Guinevere suffer any illness, all of which are integral to the episode in the *Prophesies de Merlin*.

For the non-cyclic version of the episode, see *Lancelot do Lac*, ed. Kennedy, i, pp. 585-608; *Lancelot*, ed. Micha, vol.3, pp. 22-61. For further discussion of the two versions of this episode, see: Micha, 'Les épisodes du Voyage en Sorelois et de la Fausse Guenièvre'; Kennedy, 'The two versions of the False Guinevere Episode in the Old French Prose *Lancelot*'; Kennedy, *Lancelot and the Grail*, pp. 253-273, Chapter 10, 'Lancelot with the Grail: first stage. The two versions of the Journey to Sorelois, the False Guinevere episode, and the Death of Galehot'; Micha, *Essais*, pp. 57-83, Chapter 3, 'La version spéciale du Voyage en Sorelois et de la Fausse Guenièvre'.

**Summary**

Lancelot, ed. Micha, vol.1, III, §1 - IX, §37

**III, §1, p.18**

A messenger arrives at Arthur's court bearing a letter (§1). This letter accuses Queen Guinevere of being an impostor. The author of the letter (the False Guinevere) claims to be the true queen Guinevere, and that she was abducted on her wedding night, and replaced by her maid. Accompanying the letter, the pretender to the queen's throne sends a knight, Bertolais le Vieux, to support her claim (§8-10).

Gauvain refutes the accusation on the Queen's behalf (§19-20). He offers to fight for her, but when Bertelais takes up this challenge, the latter is dismissed as being too old. Instead, it is proposed that the messenger return to Carmelide to bring back with her three of their best knights to undertake this judicial combat (§22). Arthur arranges that the two courts meet at Bredigan in order to make a judgement. The tale leaves Arthur and his court (§26).

**VI, §12, p.94**

Arthur and his court arrive at Bredigan a week early, and await news from the False Guinevere. Arthur consults his advisors and his barons as to what to do, although he is inclined to believe the claims of the girl (§12).

The narrator gives detail about the background to the False Guinevere's claim (§13). King Leodagan of Carmelide had an illegitimate daughter by the wife of a favourite seneschal. This daughter was very beautiful and could hardly be told apart from the king's legitimate daughter, and in fact her name was also Guinevere. This second Guinevere devised a plan to replace the queen through treachery, but fled

abroad when she feared she had been found out. Whilst she was away, she met Bertelais le Vieux, who promised to help her carry out her plan. He took her back to Carmelide, where they claimed she was the king's daughter rather than the seneschal's daughter. Accepting the word of Bertelais, the barons of Carmelide believed this story (§14).

The False Guinevere arrives at Bredigan to meet Arthur (§15). She repeats her accusations of treachery against the Queen. Queen Guinevere repudiates the accusations in front of the king (§16). It is confirmed that, due to the serious nature of the accusations, it will be necessary for the court to make a judgement (§17). Before this can be done, the accuser has to pledge to abide by such a judgement. The seneschal's daughter is granted leave to consult her barons (§18). Bertelais advises her that to await the king's judgement is too risky, as it could well go in favour of the innocent queen, the False Guinevere would be destroyed. Instead, he devises the following plan. The False Guinevere will request another day's leave from the king. At the same time, a messenger will be sent to court to tell of a marvellous wild boar which has been spotted in the forest. As Arthur loves to hunt, he will go after the boar. When he is in the forest, the False Guinevere's knights will capture him and take him back to Carmelide and into her hands, where she will be able to do what she will with him (§§19-22).

This plan is carried out, and Arthur is taken prisoner (§§24-28). His disappearance is a cause of great concern for the queen and his knights. The pretender to the queen's throne arrives at Arthur's court asking for the king as if nothing had happened, pretending to become very angry when Arthur does not appear (§§32-34).



Back at Carmelide, the False Guinevere begins to make her move on Arthur. She visits him frequently, charming and seducing him into forgetting his queen and falling in love with her instead:

Si m'aît Diex, fet li rois, bele douce amie, je vos aim plus orendroit que feme qui vive et il  
est voirs que j'ai molt amee cele que j'ai eue, mais vos le m'avés fete tote oblier: si vos aim  
tant que je ferai tote vostre volenté, et commandes moi comment vos volés que je le face.

(§38, p.108)

He agrees to take her as his wife in front of everyone, if she will get all the barons of Carmelide to support her claim (§§36-38).

## VII, §1, p.110.

In the king's absence, Gauvain, Galehout, Lancelot, Yvain and Kay agree to protect the queen between them (§1). An assembly of all the barons is called to decide what to do, as Logres should not continue for too long without a king. Gauvain, as Arthur's closest friend, is chosen as a temporary replacement (§§4-5). The queen and the rest of Arthur's court suffer greatly with the loss of Arthur (§§6-11) until Arthur sends a message to Cardueil asking for news of Gauvain, and they know that he is alive (§12). The messenger tells Gauvain that Arthur wishes all his barons to gather at Zelegebres in the kingdom of Carmelide at Ascension (§13).

Guinevere tells Galehout that she fears for her life should Arthur decide that she is indeed an impostor (§§16-17). Galehout pledges to protect her life come what may (§§18-19).

Both sides assemble at Zelegebres as agreed (§§20-21), and Arthur announces that he has accepted the claims of the False Guinevere to be queen (§22). His barons express their shock, but Arthur will not be persuaded otherwise (§§23-24). As proof, Arthur asks all the barons of Carmelide to swear an oath that the False Guinevere is indeed the queen, although he asks no one to defend the true queen (§§25-26).

Galehout persuades Arthur to withhold judgement over the Queen until Pentecost, and the Queen is given into the care of Gauvain until that time (§§27-29).

### VIII, §1, p.123.

At Pentecost, the Queen is taken before the king and the barons for judgement (§1). Talking amongst themselves, the barons comment that the King clearly wants the queen to be put to death, but that they will not let it happen. Galehout suggests they try and persuade Arthur to wait for another day:

Por ce seroit biens que vos demandissies respit del jugemnet jusqu'a un autre jor et entre  
ci et la s'en ira mesire li rois et nos tuit de cest pais, et tels chose puet avenir que cil qui en  
ceste rage nos a mis ne sera pas si alumés de l'autre come il est ore. (§2, p.124)

The king, under the influence of the False Guinevere, refuses this request (§3). The barons of Logres refuse to take part in the judgement, and swear that if the queen is condemned to death, they will leave Arthur (§§4-6). Galehout and Lancelot discuss the possibility that the Queen will be condemned to death, and they decide that Lancelot will offer himself as her champion (§§7-8).

Meanwhile, Arthur and the barons of Carmelide have arrived at their judgement against the Queen. The barons of Logres are angered:

Quant li baron de Breitaine oïrent ce, si n'ot en els que corocier et dot chescuns qu'il ne  
sera je en liue ou ce soit fet. (§10, pp.127-128)

Lancelot then challenges the king's judgement and offers himself in combat to prove his case. He even offers to fight against three of Arthur's best knights, but the king refuses (§§11-17). Instead, the barons of Carmelide offer three of their own knights to fight Lancelot (§§18-20). The details of the combat are worked out, the courts adjourn to Bredigan to prepare (§§21-28). The king is greatly saddened, as it seems Lancelot has little chance against the three knights from Carmelide. He tries to persuade Lancelot to give up the idea of fighting by offering to acquit the queen, but Lancelot refuses (§29).

Lancelot takes on his opponents one by one, and defeats the first two easily (§§30-37). He would have defeated the third, but the Queen asks for mercy on his behalf, and Lancelot lets him go (§§38-45). Lancelot's victories ensure the Queen's acquittal (§44), and Galehout offers her refuge at his court (§47). The Queen agrees, and puts the idea to Arthur. Arthur consults his barons, who tell him that the decision is his, as it was his decision to exile her in the first place (§§48-50). The False Guinevere hears of these discussions and sends a messenger to Arthur telling him that the queen must not remain in any land in which she would benefit from Arthur's protection in any way, and so Guinevere is placed in Galehout's hands (§§51-54).

Lancelot chooses to remain with Galehout. Arthur tries to persuade him to return to his court, but Lancelot refuses (§§55-58):

Sire, fet Lancelos, grans merci, mais je n'ai cure de vostre terre, ne maltalent n'ai je mie a vos, mais en nule maniere ne remandroie en cest point por home qui m'en seust proier, et sel vos jur par la messe que j'ai hui oïe chanter. (§58, p.149)

Everyone returns home, with Arthur saddened by the loss of Lancelot (§§59-61).

## IX, §1, p.151.

Gauvain accompanies the queen to Galehout's court in Sorelois, and remains until he is satisfied that she is treated well, at which point he leaves. Lancelot stays with the queen in Sorelois, where she remains for two years (§§1-4):

En tel maniere fu la roine en la terre de Sorelois et ot assés sovent la compaignie Galehout et de son ami, et totes voies fu avec li la dame de Maloaut, et se ne fust a compaignie de ces trois, ele ne puist durer al solas et a la compaignie que ele ot eu. Ensint demora en Sorelois .II. ans la roine, et li rois Artus fu ausi en son país et se il ot amee sa feme durement devant, encor ama il ceste deus tans après. Tant alerent les choses que le pape de Rome qui lors tenoit le siege le sot, si le tint a molt grant despit, quant si haus hom com li rois de Bretagne avoit deguerpie sa feme sans le seu de Sainte Iglise: si a commandé que la venjance Mostre Seignor soit espendue par la terre ou il prist sa premiere feme, tant que il fust racordés par Sainte Iglise. En ceste maniere fu entredite la terre le roi Artu vint et un mois. (§4, p.153)

Meanwhile, Arthur remains under the influence of the False Guinevere, who controls him with magic potions, and is hated by the king's barons:

Et ele avoit si conrée le roi par poisons qu'il ne savoit riens contredire qui li pleust, si avoit ja tant fet que tuit le haoient li baron. (§5, p.153)

Arthur and the False Guinevere go everywhere together:

Ce fu l'entrée des Avens que li rois avoit cort tenue a Carlion, et la roine i estoit, kar il le menoit avec lui en os et en chevalchies et en tornoiemens, s'il i alast. (§5, p153)

But relations between the False Guinevere and the barons became so bad that she took to her rooms, where she fell ill:

mais il ne gisoit pas o li, for quant il ert priveement, tant qu'avint chose qu'entrer la roine et les barons ot descorde et ele entra en ses chambres, so perdi la nuit la force de tos ses membres qu'ele ne s'en pot aidier fors des ielx, et comença a porrir des les piés en amont. (§5, pp.153-154)

At the same time, Bertelais li Vieux also fell ill. Arthur stayed with them at

Bredigan for a while, but eventually returned to Camaalot (§6):

Molt longuement dura la maladie si qu'en la fin maheigna et pui si durement, quant ele comença a porrir, que nus ne la pooit soffrir. Cele nuit meismes qu'ele fu ensi atornee fu autel conreés Bertelais le Viels. De ceste chose ot li rois molt grant dolor, si demora a Bredigan grant piece puis que ce fu avenü, mais en la fin l'enmena mesire Gauvain a Camaalot por sejourner, kar il ne voloit mie estre blasmés de ses barons et dist que sovent orroit noveles de la roine, se il estoit la. (§6, pp.154-155)

There, Gauvain chastises Arthur for the lack of the lack of entertainment he offers his barons:

Sire, l'en vos tient molt a iros, quant vos mostrés si poi de joie a vos barons, qui avés esté li plus envoisiés rois qui onques fust: si vos covenroit deduire plus envoiement et de riviére et de bois et aler en la compaignie des gens, kar nus ne le hante qui n'oblit grant parité de fol pensé, se il i a. (§7, p.155)

The king agrees that this has been lacking, and proposes that, in order to rectify this, a hunt be organised for the following day (§7).

The hunt is successful, and the king and his barons feast upon their prey (§§8-10). Arthur falls violently ill, and calls for confession (§10). A hermit arrives and Arthur confesses that he should not have taken the False Guinevere as his wife, even though he truly believed her to be his true queen. The hermit absolves him, and offers to resolve the whole confusion about the true identity of the two Guineveres, as he had formerly been the chaplain to the true Guinevere before she married Arthur (§§11-17).

When Arthur has recovered from his illness, he receives a message from the False Guinevere telling him to visit her. The hermit advises him to go, but to take his barons and the hermit (§18). At Bredigan, the king visits the False Guinevere, who is very ill, and who asks to be taken back to Carmelide (§19). The king tells her that it would be a dangerous journey for her in her condition, and she agrees to make her confession to the hermit first (§20). At the same time, Bertelais le Vieux, who is also dying, requests to speak to the king and his barons (§21). Meanwhile, the False Guinevere confesses the whole story of her treachery and deception to the hermit (§§22-23).

Bertelais makes a similar confession to Arthur and his barons (§§24-25). The False Guinevere repeats her confession to the King, and Arthur's barons demand revenge, but the hermit advises Arthur to leave the pair to God's judgement. Arthur sends them away to a hospital, where they suffer for a long while before they finally die (§§26-27).

When the barons of Carmelide hear the truth, they are horrified. Fearing they will be disowned by the true Guinevere, daughter of their king, they rush to Sorelois to seek her forgiveness. Overcome by the news that she has been vindicated, Guinevere grants them pardon (§§28-29).

Arthur sends a party, including the hermit, to fetch Guinevere from Sorelois to return to his side as his queen (§§30-31). Guinevere is overjoyed at the news, and returns to Arthur, who welcomes her with open arms (§§32-37).

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